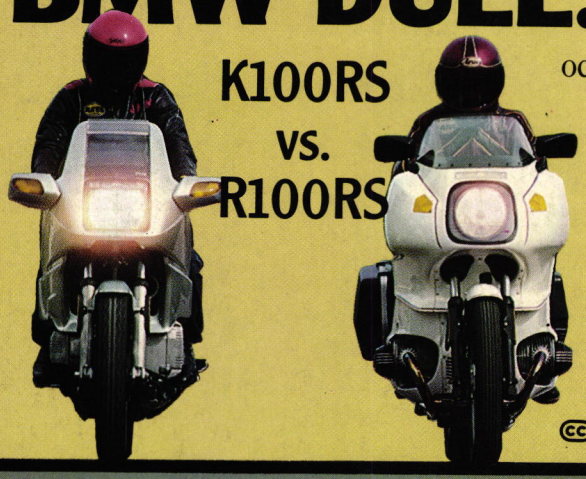
TESTS: Harley-Davidson FXRT, Suzuki GS1150ES, BMW K100RS, K100RT, R100RS, Honda VF700F, Can-Am 320T, Suzuki 250 Quadrunner

CYCLE GUIDE

BMW DUEL:



K100RS vs. R100RS

OCTOBER
1984
$1.50

CC 02763

1985 FXRT:

Belt-Drive Bomber

DIR 1213
ALAWRL449DOUI4 ID CG MAR86
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449 DOUGLAS DR
BROWNSBURG IN 46112

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Italian Currency Devalued Against U.S. Dollar

WORLD FAMOUS GHIBLI HELMET TO BE SOLD FOR $69 A PIECE DURING MAMMOTH PUBLICITY DRIVE

THIS IS NOT *A MISPRINT*

The Italian manufacturer of the famous Ghibli Motorcycle Helmet was so pleased with the first publicity campaign (held during the 4th quarter of 1983), that he has agreed to offer a second shipment of 10,000 Ghibli Helmets at the same price reduction, in an unprecedented move to gain market share and help convert Italian manufactured goods to valuable U.S. dollars.

All who wish to apply for a new GHIBLI HELMET should write to the company address below before Midnight, January 31, 1985

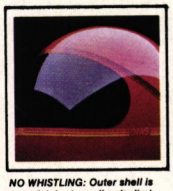
Special Note: The previous promotion of this helmet was a complete sell out - so act now for best color selection.

NEWPORT BEACH, CALIFORNIA Ten thousand new GHIBLI Motorcycle helmets, with lever activated, three (3) position flip shield and patented *"Easy Action"* quick release chin strap, will be sold as part of a giant publicity campaign for only *$69 apiece to the first ten thousand who write or call the company before midnight, January 31st, 1985.

These are the same famous Ghibli Helmets that retail for over $110 each and were featured in the pages of ***Playboy magazine, Cycle World, Cycle Guide, Rider*** and other leading magazines and referred to as ***"the first totally new helmet to come along in a decade".***

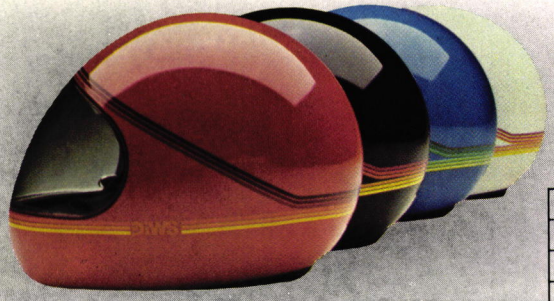
LEVER ACTION: Simply push the lever and the shield opens in one smooth, single hand operation.

THREE POSITION SHIELD: Precision molded flip shield will lock into any of three positions.


NO WHISTLING: Outer shell is completely streamlined, eliminating wind and water leakage.

QUICK RELEASE STRAP: "Easy Action" chin strap, simpler to fasten or release than any other type of chin strap.

Weighing less than many open faced helmets, the Ghibli still exceeds all National and International government safety standards, including D.O.T. and is fully approved for use in all AMA sanctioned motorcycle competition events. At the same time, Ghibli includes features never before available on motorcycle helmets. Features such as flush mounted *"3-position"* face shield that eliminates whistling and wind noise. A quick-release chin strap mechanism, which enables helmet removal, even with bulky gloves on.



Colors: Monza Blue, Alpine White
Ferrari Red, Onyx Black

These GHIBLI Helmets will not be sold at this price by this company in any store. To obtain one at this price, apply in writing or by telephone to the company no later than midnight, January 31, 1985.

Each helmet carries a *full one-year warranty*. There is a limit of (2) helmets per address at these prices, but requests mailed or called in early enough (before January 15, 1985) are permitted to order up to 6 helmets.

To apply for a new Ghibli Helmet, mail this original printed notice together with your name and address and *$69 for each helmet, plus only $4. for shipping and handling no matter how many helmets you request. Replacement shield in tint or clear, only $9.

Mail to:

GHIBLI HELMET PROMOTION
3857 Birch St., Dept. 335 CG-3
Newport Beach, CA 92660

Or call direct for phone order information:

NATION
1-714-547-5702

OUTSIDE CALIFORNIA
1-800-621-9183

NOTE: Payment may be made by *Visa, Mastercard, American Express* or Money Order. Do not send cash.

GHIBLI SIZING CHART	
HEAD MEASURE	**HELMET SIZE**
21 3/4" to 22 1/4"	Small
22 3/8" to 23"	Medium
23 1/8" to 23 5/8"	Large
23 3/4" to 24 1/4"	X-Large

*These are promotional prices **only** and therefore are good only thru the dates and times listed above.
For up to date prices after January 31, 1985 write or call company direct.

CYCLE GUIDE

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ON THE COVER:
This trio bridges the gap between Euro- and American-style sport-touring. Vic Huber shot the Harley under the bright lights, while David Dewhurst captured the pair of Beemers in their natural habitat.

QUOTE:
"Those are the guys (Lawson, Mamola and Rainey) that couldn't cut it in dirttrack"
—Pg. 67

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CYCLE GUIDE'S CYCLE GUIDE

Cycle Guide's catalog of recent test hardware—no brag, just fact

OFF-ROAD

MAKE & MODEL	ISSUE	TYPE	ENGINE TYPE	WHEEL TRAVEL, IN. FRONT/REAR	WEIGHT, LBS.	RAKE/TRAIL, DEGREES/INCHES	GEARS
Cagiva WRX 250-'84	August '84	Enduro	Two-stroke	11.1/11.6	232	30.0/4.65	6
Cagiva WMX 250-'84	January '84	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.9/12.7	221	28.0/4.65	6
Can-Am 320 Trials-'84	October '84	Trials	Two-stroke	4.8/4.5	205	25.5/3.00	6
Can-Am Sonic MX-'83	January '83	Motocross	Four-stroke	11.6/12.1	272	28.0/4.24	5
Honda ATC200X-'83	August '83	ATV	Four-stroke	7.2/6.2	285	N/A	5
Honda ATC250R-'84	May '84	ATV	Two-stroke	8.8/8.0	311	N/A	5
Honda CR125R-'84	April '84	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.2/12.3	195	27.2/4.29	6
Honda CR250R-'84	February '84	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.7/12.2	216	26.7/4.13	5
Honda CR500R-'84	June '84	Motocross	Two-stroke	12.0/12.5	228	27.2/4.25	5
Honda XR200R-'84	August '84	Enduro	Four-stroke	9.9/9.6	235	26.0/4.13	6
Honda XR350R-'83	June '83	Enduro	Four-stroke	10.9/10.4	253	26.0/3.94	6
Honda XR500R-'83	October '83	Desert	Four-stroke	11.0/12.2	278	25.5/3.94	5
Husqvarna 250CR-'83	January '83	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.8/12.7	227	30.0/5.51	6
Husqvarna 400WR-'84	July '84	Enduro	Two-stroke	11.0/11.2	242	28.5/5.16	6
Husqvarna 500CR-'83	May '83	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.8/12.8	240	30.0/5.51	4
Husqvarna 500XC-'83	October '83	Desert	Two-stroke	11.7/12.8	245	30.0/5.98	6
Kawasaki KXT250 Tecate-'84	May '84	ATV	Two-stroke	8.6/8.2	319	N/A	5
Kawasaki KDX200-'84	August '84	Enduro	Two-stroke	10.0/10.9	214	28.0/4.76	6
Kawasaki KDX250-'83	November '83	Enduro	Two-stroke	10.1/10.7	232	29.0/5.00	6
Kawasaki KX125-'84	April '84	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.7/12.2	195	27.5/4.57	6
Kawasaki KX250-'84	February '84	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.6/12.3	220	28.5/4.65	5
Kawasaki KX500-'83	May '83	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.7/11.9	232	29.0/4.80	5
Kawasaki KLR600-'84	September '84	Dual-purpose	Four-stroke	9.2/8.3	322	29.5/4.80	5
KTM MC 495-'83	May '83	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.9/12.4	249	28.0/4.21	4
Maico 490 Spider-'83	May '83	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.8/12.2	240	27.0/4.72	4
Suzuki ALT50-'83	June '83	ATV	Two-stroke	N/A	90	N/A	1
Suzuki Quadrunner 250-'84	October '84	ATV	Four-stroke	1.0/N/A	384	N/A	5
Suzuki RM125-'84	April '84	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.5/12.4	190	29.5/4.84	6
Suzuki RM250-'84	February '84	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.8/12.9	220	27.8/4.41	5
Suzuki RM500-'83	May '83	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.9/12.8	234	29.7/4.84	4
Yamaha IT200-'84	August '84	Enduro	Two-stroke	10.0/10.6	211	28.0/4.53	6
Yamaha YZ125-'84	April '84	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.9/12.3	194	27.7/4.57	6
Yamaha YZ250-'84	February '84	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.3/12.6	214	28.0/4.69	5
Yamaha YZ490-'84	June '84	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.3/12.7	227	28.5/4.72	4

STREET

MAKE & MODEL	ISSUE	ENGINE TYPE*	DISPLACEMENT, CC	QUARTER-MILE, SEC./MPH	TOP SPEED, MPH	WEIGHT, LBS.	FUEL CONSUMPTION, MPG	STOPPING DISTANCE FROM 60 MPH, FT.
BMW R100RS-'84	October '84	2C/G	979.9	13.425/95.84	111	506	45–57	163
BMW K100RS-'84	October '84	4I/G	987.2	12.381/109.48	133	532	39–54	139
H-D FXRS Low Glide-'84	January '84	45 deg. 2D/F	1337.7	13.917/94.57	112	575	38–48	140
H-D FXRT Sport Glide-'85	October '84	45 deg. 2D/F	1337.7	14.180/90.36	92	640	28–51	126
H-D FLTC Tour Glide-'84	March '84	45 deg. 2D/F	1337.7	14.603/88.75	107	774	39–54	152
H-D XLS Roadster-'83	April '83	45 deg. 2D/F	997.6	13.842/93.94	106	515	43–55	138
H-D XLX-61-'83	June '83	45 deg. 2D/F	997.6	13.459/95.94	106	488	40–72	128
Honda CX650 Custom-'83	May '83	80 deg. 2E/G	673.5	12.560/102.97	119	454	38–48	124
Honda GL1200A Aspencade-'84	March '84	4C/G	1181.9	13.156/98.14	118	744	33–46	141
Honda Nighthawk 650-'83	December '82	4A/G	656.0	12.287/108.04	122	451	29–51	127
Honda Nighthawk S-'84	February '84	4A/G	696.7	12.048/109.75	125	492	28–45	125
Honda VF400F-'83	September '83	90 deg. 4D/F	399.1	13.588/96.35	112	402	34–51	127
Honda VF500F Interceptor-'84	July '84	90 deg. 4D/F	497.6	12.484/106.00	126	419	33–48	123
Honda VF700F Interceptor-'84	October '84	90 deg. 4D/F	698.9	12.323/106.50	124	512	37–48	136
Honda VF750F Interceptor-'84	May '84	90 deg. 4D/F	748.1	11.890/114.64	140	511	23–39	127
Honda VF1000F Interceptor-'84	May '84	90 deg. 4D/F	998.4	11.121/123.45	150	536	23–45	125
Honda V45 Sabre-'83	September '83	90 deg. 4D/G	748.1	12.179/111.11	128	514	33–46	130
Honda VT500 Ascot-'83	October '83	52 deg. 2D/G	490.9	13.628/93.75	112	411	41–61	129
Honda VT750C Shadow-'83	April '83	45 deg. 2D/G	749.6	12.906/100.78	127	484	48–55	132
Kawasaki GPz550-'84	July '84	4A/F	553.8	12.559/105.38	123	436	32–59	136
Kawasaki GPz750-'84	May '84	4A/F	739.0	12.114/110.97	135	502	37 47	120
Kawasaki GPz750 Turbo-'83	July '83	4A/F	739.0	11.225/123.53	146	514	N/A	N/A
Kawasaki GPz1100-'84	May '84	4A/F	1089.9	11.312/120.80	145	560	24 48	120
Kawasaki KZ700-'84	August '84	4A/F	694.9	12.433/107.01	127	483	39–53	132
Kawasaki Ninja-'84	May '84	4A/F	908.2	11.181/123.62	146	523	24–44	126
Kawasaki Voyager-'84	March '84	6A/G	1286.1	13.346/97.61	116	882	28–44	142
Laverda RGS 1000-'84	December '83	3A/F	980.8	12.565/106.50	130	556	25–40	140
Suzuki GS550ES-'84	July '84	4A/F	572.3	12.675/103.68	123	444	30–51	135
Suzuki GS650M Katana-'83	November '83	4A/G	673.9	13.238/101.01	122†	491	49–60	137
Suzuki GS750E-'83	August '83	4A/F	747.4	11.893/112.92	131†	485	35–50	135
Suzuki GS1150ES-'84	October '84	4A/F	1135.4	11.268/122.44	148	542	26–51	122
Yamaha RZ350-'84	July '84	2A/F††	347.4	13.529/97.61	111	357	26–53	122
Yamaha RZ500-'84	September '84	4D/F††	499.7	12.053/112.64	136	439	25–37	N/A
Yamaha FJ600-'84	July '84	4A/F	598.8	12.468/105.63	126	435	32–50	129
Yamaha FJ1100-'84	June '84	4A/F	1097.6	10.992/124.48	146	535	27–46	121
Yamaha 920 Virago-'83	April '83	75 deg. 2D/G	920.0	12.835/101.46	108	503	38–45	138
Yamaha Venture Royale-'84	March '84	70 deg. 4D/G	1197.6	12.759/101.46	124	752	37–53	137

*__A__-Transverse Vertical, __B__-Vertical (single-cylinder only), __C__-Horizontally Opposed, __D__-Tandem Vee, __E__-Transverse Vee, __F__-Chain Final Drive, __G__-Shaft Final Drive, __H__-Belt Final Drive, __I__-Horizontal Longitudinal

† indicates a calculated top speed; †† indicates a two-stroke engine

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THE MOST HONORED MOTORCYCLE IN JAPANESE HISTORY ISN'T JAPANESE.

November 25, 1983, was a face-losing day for Japanese motorcycle makers.

It was on that day that Japan's fabled buff book, Car Graphic, dedicated an entire issue to, of all things, a German motorcycle.

"Occasioned by the announcement of the epoch-making superbikes which BMW calls its K-series," the dedication read, "we at CG have condensed the entire BMW Motorcycle story into this one volume for the enjoyment of our devoted readers."

And devoted they are. To the Japanese enthusiast, Car Graphic is the bible of all motorcycle and automotive writing.

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"The K turned out to be a bike in which no flaws could be found... built with a precision that far surpasses that of other bikes....

"There is nothing equivocal about the electronically controlled twin-cam engine which begins to push the K 100 smoothly, exuberantly, with a power that is beautiful to experience.... I don't know if there has ever been a bike that negotiates the low-speed region so aesthetically....The bike holds its course through turn after turn... so that the powerful twin-cam four-cylinder engine can be used to the fullest....

"Though still unfulfilled, the dream of one day owning a BMW motorcycle burns continually somewhere in my mind."

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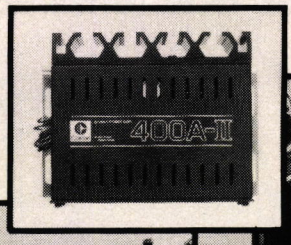

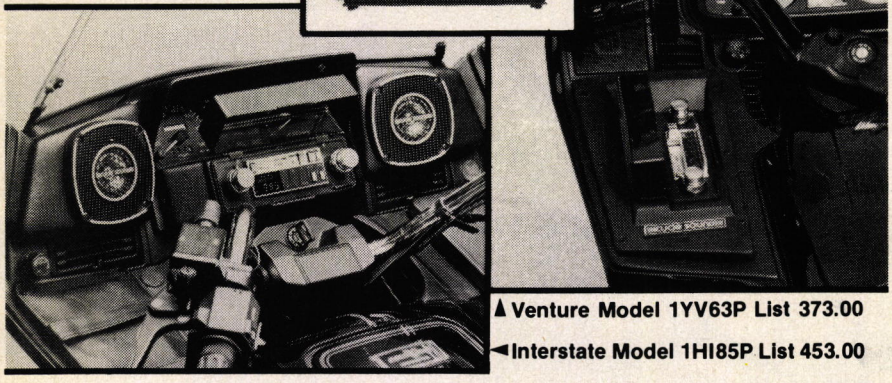

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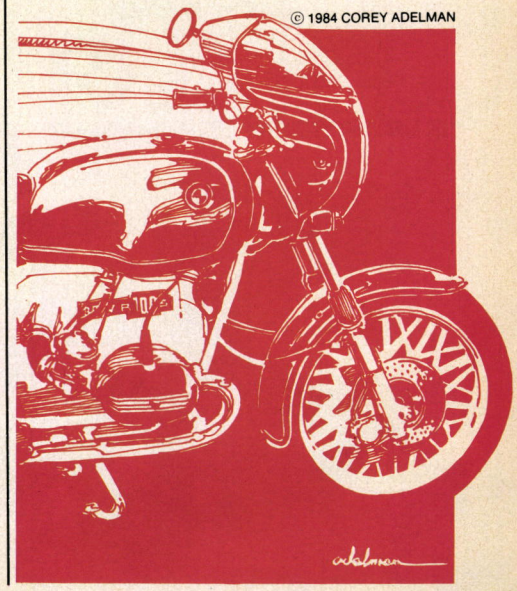


Editorial

The Greatest Racing Story Never Told

Eddie who?

• By the time you get this issue of CYCLE GUIDE, you'll probably know that Eddie Lawson has all but beaten Freddie Spencer for the 500cc Grand Prix roadracing World Championship, and that Randy Mamola is in third place. And you might even know that Broc Glover took the American round of the Open-class World Motocross Championship, and that Ron Lechien won the 250-class motocross GP.

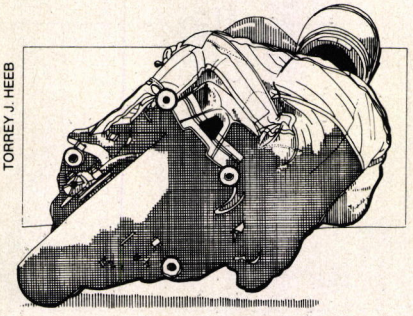
You might know these things if you read Cycle News, or perhaps by word of mouth. But if you rely on daily newspapers for the information, you'd be smooth out of luck. It takes only a cursory examination of most American papers' sports sections to realize that, for the most part, their editors don't know who Lawson, Spencer, Mamola, Glover and Lechien are. They don't appear to care to know, either.

On the face of it, such an attitude seems incomprehensible. What is *wrong* with the newspapers? These are *Americans,* brave, talented, skillful men, world championship contenders who work hard to be the best in the world at what they do, and who beat the Europeans at their own game. They're heart-attack serious about their sport, they're successful at it, and they're every bit the athletes that McEnroe, Valenzuela or Magic Johnson are. Don't racing's best and brightest deserve the same coverage, the same recognition?

Apparently not, if newspapers are any indication, because motorcycle racing gets second-class coverage in most papers, if it gets reported at all.

If you're searching for reasons for that seeming indifference, you can save yourself the trouble. The reasons are simple and inseparable: It has to do with reader interest, coupled to a lack of information. Take The New York Times, for example, the nation's self-proclaimed source of "All the news that's fit to print." The sports editor of that journal lays it out nicely and simply: His readers aren't interested in *any* sort of motorized sports, let alone motorcycle racing.

It's not just a shortage of interest that keeps motorcycle racing out of Sports Illustrated, though. Admittedly, Sports Illustrated isn't a newspaper, but it is one of the nation's premier general-interest sports magazines, and as such



TORREY J. HEEB

could reasonably be expected to cover world championship motorcycling events. Not so, because according to SI's assistant managing editor, motorcycle racing is not what the SI audience wants to read about. "Our readers," he says, "are not the motorcycle crowd in any shape or form, and I don't see that changing. It (motorcycle racing) is not something we feel is for Sports Illustrated." Unfortunately, SI doesn't do reader surveys to back up that contention. But the magazine does use letters to gauge reader interest, and he says he hasn't seen two letters asking for more motorcycle coverage.

At the Los Angeles Times, the story is a little different. Shav Glick, a staff writer there, maintains that his readers *are* interested in motorcycle racing coverage, and indeed, the L.A. Times' coverage is a cut above that of most of the nation's dailies. He says the problem is a lack of information.

A *lack of information?* How can that be? Simple. Almost every newspaper relies heavily on wire-service reports for most of its news; newspaper staffs just aren't large enough to send someone to every newsworthy event. And most papers subscribe to the three main wire services: United Press International, Associated Press and the British-based Reuters. Ah, but there's the rub. The AP and UPI both suffer from the same staff-allocation problems as the newspapers; there aren't enough people to cover every event. So, the wire services have to rely on stringers to get race reports, sometimes getting full stories, often only getting finishing results—and other times getting nothing at all. Reuters, however, covers every major racing event. But Reuters doesn't put sports information out over the wire to its American subscribers, so as not to compete with the AP. As a result, the one wire service that *could* get complete coverage of world championship races to American dailies, doesn't.

Yet, if the wire services can't provide the information, what organization can? It would be convenient to point the finger at the American Motorcyclist Association. After all, we're talking about American contenders in world championship races, and one might assume the AMA would want to indulge in a little boosterism for its own sake. The situation isn't that simple, though, because the AMA can't get the information any more easily than can the wire services. And, besides, the AMA isn't the sanctioning body for world championship events; they're sanctioned by the Federation Internationale Motocycliste.

There is something you can do about the cold-shoulder news treatment of motorcycle racing, however, something that could crack the odious little nut of circular reasoning that makes racing coverage almost nonexistent. And the reasoning runs like this: Without reader interest, there will be no coverage; but without the coverage, there's nothing to generate reader interest. It's a simple, self-fulfilling prophecy, and the only way to break out of it is to write or call your local paper and tell the editors what you want to read. Newspapers and magazines alike are expected to be in some way responsive to readers' desires, and the wire services are likewise expected to respond to subscribers' needs. And you can be guaranteed that if the papers start howling for more information on motorcycle racing, the wire services will provide it. Plus, there's the possiblity of a trickle-down effect. If world championship races get mentioned, then maybe newspaper editors will start paying attention to events in their own backyards, such as AMA Nationals, which have suffered the same lack of coverage as GPs.

But if you don't act, nothing will change. Life will go on as always, and Lawson, Spencer, Mamola—and others—some of America's greatest sporting heroes, will continue to do great things, stunning the rest of the world with their abilities, and winning world championships. And they'll continue to be strangers in their homeland, because almost no one will know.

—Charles Everitt

Setting It Right

Steering Clear

Did you hear the future coming?

• Coming events, according to popular supposition, cast their shadows before them. It is a proposition likely to be disputed by anyone who was in London when the place was being bombarded with V2 rockets. Arriving at about four times the speed of sound, they sent no harbingers at all: Only after they exploded could they be heard coming.

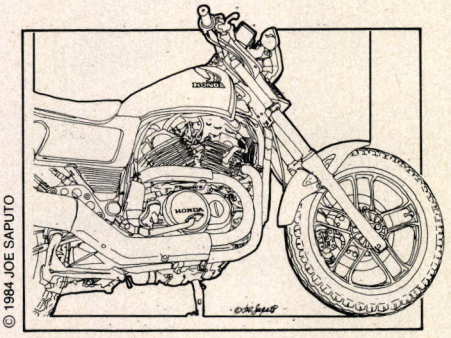
Fortunately—if only for the marketing strategists—things do not happen so quickly in the world of motorcycling. There never has been a revolution, welcome or otherwise, that no one heard coming. The arrival of radial-ply tires, the departure of Norton, the architecture of the CB750 Honda, the imposition of emissions controls, all were preceded by signs and portents galore. Only the hapless wights who failed to hear the harbingers claimed that it is easy to be wise after the event.

It is nothing of the sort. Being wise after any unanticipated event is a matter of not being caught unawares by the next one, of learning to read the signals and to hear the jungle drums. If we are to be wise, we must identify the ripples before the big breaker arrives.

Have you heard anything? The whispers have been current for decades. It is a rising murmur now. Before long, every advertising copycat will be shouting it from his megaphone: The days of the telescopic fork are numbered.

It is obvious from Honda's endorsement of the Elf, that beautiful French racer whose front hub is carried between two ball-joints on the front ends of unilateral suspension arms which would not look out of place on a Citroen. It is obvious from the hub-center steering, geometrically as crude as in the American Neracar but so refined mechanically as to have hydraulic connections to the tiller, in the latest Bimota. It is obvious from the brake-dive inhibitors built into the front legs of every current Japanese sportbike. It is obvious from the fact that every other part of the motorcycle has been revised thoroughly in the last few desperate sale-seeking years, and that the need for a compelling novelty has never been more urgent.

Years ago (seven, I think), Honda's motorcycle R-D chief Soichiro Irimajiri told me that he had his own designs for a new front suspension (I had been offering him some of mine) ready for adoption whenever the time seemed ripe. Harvest time is surely approaching fast.



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I am not absolutely sure there is anything seriously wrong with the steering geometry of telescopic forks. Two of the three best-steering bikes I have ridden had bottom-link forks: My Douglas 90 had leading links, my Ariel Arrow had trailing links, but the third, a Dresda, was every bit as good with telescoping trousers, over a far wider speed range than they could ever explore.

Maybe that was because the Dresda had very short suspension travel. Pitching is what upsets the teleforked motorcycle: Five degrees of nose-down or nose-up pitch easily can be induced in a softly sprung specimen, and is accompanied by the same five degrees variation in the rake of the steering axis, with corresponding changes in trail. That can do nasty things; but to secure pitch-resistance without inhibiting the suspension, the front wheel needs to move forward as it rises, not backward—and telescopics cannot do that.

Nor do they do a good job of keeping their two legs in step. Lozenging distortion of the forks in the transverse plane is hard to prevent, though, and most of the braces one sees arching over the front tire are pitifully inadequate. I have ridden empirical proof (another Dresda) that far more good can be done by enlarging the front spindle diameter.

Anyway, one of the worst design features of all established fork designs has nothing to do with the legs but with the head. In the first place, the two bearings in the steering head are too close together for rigidity. In the second place, they are too far away from the ground where the reaction takes place that they are supposed to control. In the third place, why should the entire front suspension assembly be included in the steered mass when all that really ought to be steered is the wheel?

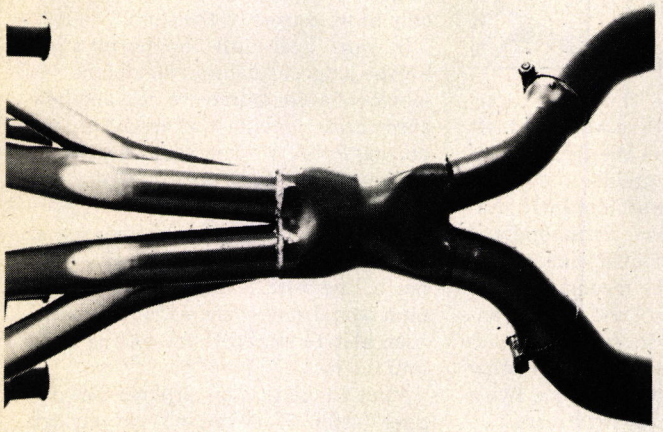
Hub-center steering of the Neracar type, as more recently seen in Difazio, Drag-Waye, Gyronaut, Quasar and Bimota, deals well enough with points two and three, but the tiny kingpin inside the hub compels the bearings to be even closer together than in the miserably old-fashioned head inherited from the bicycle. Worse still, the caster angle varies with angular deflection of the suspension arm, which must therefore be very long unless the wheel travel is (as in the Neracar) very short.

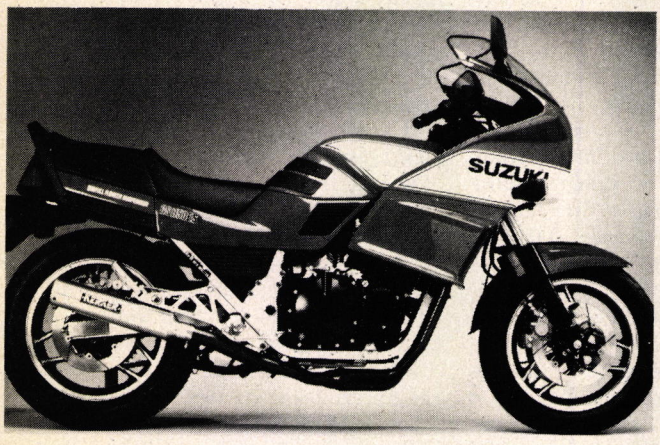
The Elf design is better. Its geometry can be matched to any designer's notions of perfection, and the two ball-joints are moderately well spaced; but they cramp the design of brakes and things, and demand unilateral suspension arms that must be very big if they are to be stiff enough. It would be far better to put one of the ball-joints inside the hub, on a spindle supported at both ends by triangulated arms, and put the other just above the top of the wheel on an extended hub-carrier. The dimensional and geometrical integrity of such a system would be hard to beat.

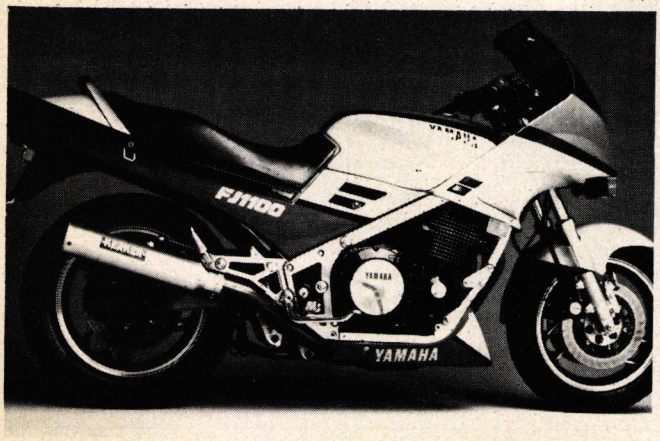
Far simpler to make, particularly suitable for the modern small-diameter tire, and incomparably easy to adjust during the development stages, is an adaptation of the wishbone suspension seen in some cars. The wheel can be carried between the legs of a frame shaped like an *A:* At the apex and on the crosspiece are the ball-joints, picked up by two triangulated arms pivoted about transverse axes on the front of the chassis. Steering, as in the other examples, can be done by a drag link corresponding in its arc with one of the suspension arms—and there is no need for handlebars that turn and trap the rider's thumbs, for they can now enjoy a simple straight-line motion fore and aft, with the grips placed anywhere the rider might like them.

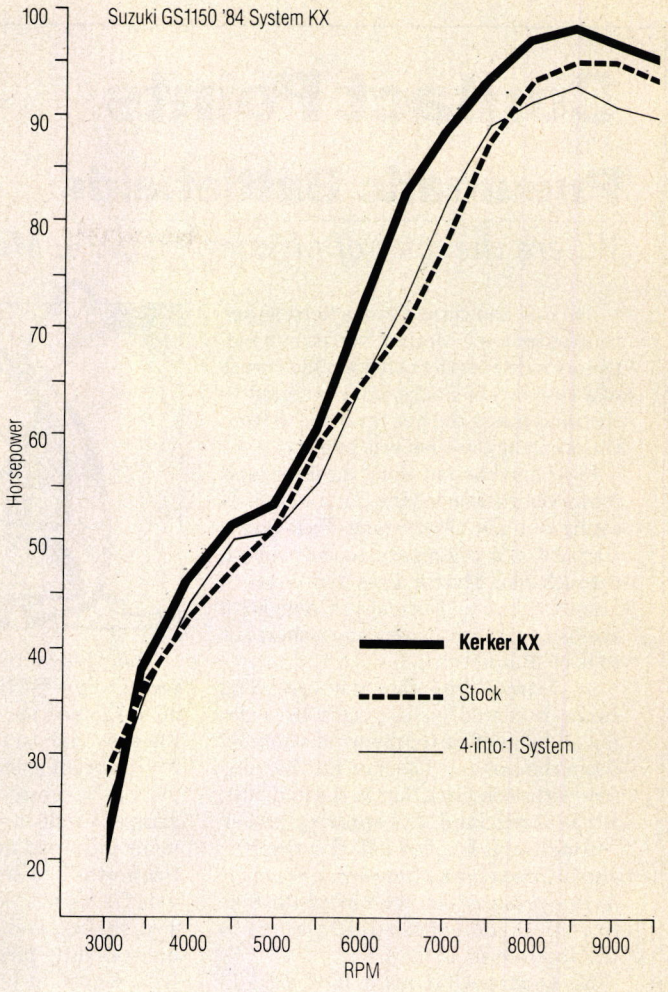
There are many more possibilities: new versions of the Duplex suspension once favoured by OEC, Watt linkages, Perbury cups. . . . I worked them all out on paper in the winter of 1970/71, and not all have yet appeared in metal; when they do, I shall not be a bit surprised—just disappointed that they took so long. What might really strike hard would be one that I had not heard coming; I hope I shall not flinch. —*L.J.K. Setright*

IMPORTANT NOTICE: TO ALL GS1150, FJ1100, FJ600 OWNERS.









Many of you, in an effort to up the performance of these potent machines, are considering switching to an aftermarket 4-into-1 exhaust system. DON'T DO IT! They will actually hinder the high performance of these models.

Exacting test, conducted under actual track conditions and on the full-size dynamometer that tuned the systems of the last three consecutive AMA Superbike Champions, conclusively proves that the traditional 4-into-1 design does not complement the high-tech motors of the GS1150, FJ1100, and FJ600. The dyno curves illustrate it. The GS1150 motor, equipped with the best 4-into-1 system, actually outputs less horsepower at both the all important 5,000-6,000 "real world riding" midrange rpm and at peak power output.

What does work is a radical revolution in exhaust systems. A 4-into-1-into-2 configuration. This design draws more exhaust away without disturbing the harmonic "rhythm" of the motor's breathing. This results in the cylinders receiving crisper, purer, more accurate charges, yielding significantly more horsepower.

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KERKER SYSTEM KX

*Test data available upon request. The new Kerker System KX is available direct by mail. Send certified check, money order, VISA or Mastercard number (including expiration date), along with bike model to Kerker. System KX: $325 plus $15 shipping/handling. CA residents add 6.5% tax.

Contact Points

Pneumatic Battlefields

Where the laws of physics, traffic & Murphy meet.

• The ride had turned into a horsepower contest between Mother Nature and me. On my side was the considerable thrust of a Honda V65 Sabre, but compared to the wind blasts she was throwing in from the ocean, my arsenal was puny.

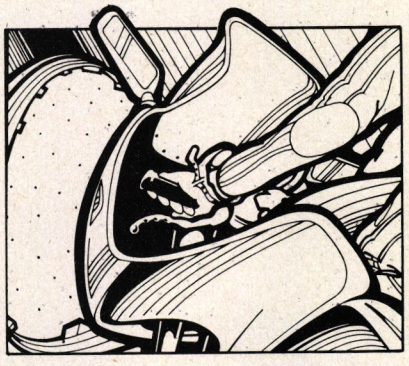
I was northbound along the coast, and for an hour these Pacific puffs were irritating but not threatening. Past Santa Barbara, it's customary to cut inland, through San Marcos Pass and down to Lake Cachuma. Normally a delightful skein of twistery, scenery and a short cut to boot. But not this day.

As I arced into the first ascending curve, bordered on the right by a denuded band of earth, the wind slammed down the canyon. The gust hit the talus face with such force that in the mid-turn I was stung hard by spraying gravel. Instinctively, I rolled off the throttle, and before you could say *brake mean effective pressure* the wind lifted the bike to vertical and I rode straight across to the opposite shoulder.

My goodness, I thought. (OK, the language of the moment was considerably more colorful.) And with the rolling stones still hammering erratic percussion on the Honda and myself, I decided it was time to get the hell out of there. Like many first-time experiences, getting blown off the road requires a certain interim of heart-pounding terror before reason returns.

The tailwind shoved me back down to the coast, where I figured the winds would be less severe. And so they were, but I knew that just ahead was Gaviota Pass, where the mountains come down to the sea. The highway twists inland again, through a narrow defile known to become a vortex of vicious whirlwinds capable of hurling the unwary traveler right into the tulies.

Now, as a native Midwesterner, I'm no stranger to windblown roads. I've dealt with The Hawk coming off Lake Michigan, and have tilted across Kansas at obtuse angles. But those were zephyrs by comparison, breezes of more or less constant velocity. This was weather of a whole 'nother magnitude. The pattern was normal for this latitude—clockwise whorls cartwheeling in, twisted into turbulent contortions by the mountains. But the intensity factor this day was bigtime, and sure enough, just below the pass, the buffeting got real.



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The Honda Sabre shuddered once, twice. . .then WHUMP! a whirlwind left hook slapped me from the right side of the slow lane to the middle of the left. My apprehension was instantly displaced by abject fear. Peripherally, I glimpsed half of a double-wide mobile home upturned on the median between the north- and southbound lanes. Tandem trailer rigs were squirming like palsied snakes, and tree limbs and other unnecessarily large objects came flying past. A genuine highway nightmare.

Maybe this is it, I thought. Judgment Day. Twilight of the gods. Götterdämmerung at Gaviota Pass. The abrupt lane change had damn near unnerved me, and the frights had me by the throat. To slow down seemed the surest way to get whisked into oblivion. So I gassed it. And at 80 mph, the Sabre could hold its own against the tempest; at slower speeds it simply skittered about the road like a toy.

Understand that this was a full-pucker situation. Survival was the issue, not just a choice between going or stopping. The wind made the transition between the two modes impossible. I was vacuum-formed onto that motorcycle: crimped, cramped, pinched and stamped at every possible point of contact. Zero clearance. No movement except at the right wrist; didn't even dare to change gears. I was scared shiftless.

In that constricted posture I swept into the blowpipe of Gaviota Pass, trying to ignore the gnawing possibility that this might be my last ride. I could imagine Rod Serling standing by the road, narrating with his crooked grin: "Consider the plight of one Tod Rafferty, a motorcyclist who happened into the midst of a pillow fight between two of the most evil demons of darkness. . . ." And for a few miles that's how it felt.

But beyond the pass the winds weakened and I untucked to check the mirror, which was filling quickly with the image of a patrol car below a flashing red light. The officer was not persuaded that the winds warranted such speed. Two weeks later I received a "Courtesy Notice": *You may post and forfeit bail in the amount of $86.00 or appear for arraignment on. . . .* Bruised by the winds only to be gouged by the state.

In court, I recounted my horror story for the judge, explaining the unique dynamics of a single-track vehicle and how gyrostatics provide the essential stabilizing forces. I offered analogies, cited my years of professional experience, did everything but weep and beg.

'Seems to me 15 miles an hour would be safer if the wind was blowing that much," he said. I allowed as how zero mph would have been safer yet, had I been able to stop without getting flung into the rocks.

"But I note that an airplane flies if it goes faster. If it doesn't get enough speed it won't even get off the ground. Which tends me to believe that you could have become airborne more likely in heavy winds by going faster rather than slower."

I tried to explain that the physical laws governing flight are not quite the same as those applied to motorcycles, but to no avail. He was apparently convinced that motorcycles can fly.

"Anyway," he said, "I respect your view of physics. I don't *agree* with it. The fine is $86.00. Can you pay it today?"

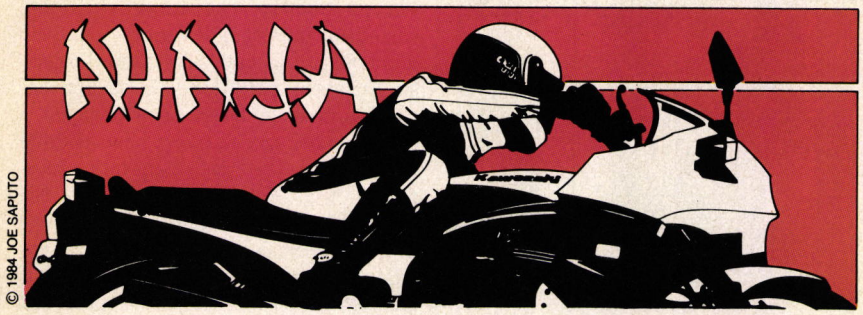
It was than I realized the irony: I had re-entered the realm of fantasy. I thought to say I'd just been kidding; that I'd actually stopped in Gaviota Pass, and that Dorothy and Toto were there talking with Yoda and Tinkerbell. We all agreed how swell it would be to have a motorcycle with wings. But the prospect of a contempt citation checked my tongue. I paid the fine.

Still, I figured that winning the war against the wind was more crucial than the skirmish with the court. After all, I did observe the laws of both nature and man. Riding a 145-mph motorcycle, I pulled over for a uniform driving a 110-mph sedan.

A poorer but wiser man, I have lived to tell the tale. —*T.J. Rafferty*

WISHBOOK

Minutes from the Last Meeting of the Council of Motorcycle Futurethink



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I don't mind if the companies want to build some of their bikes in "boy-racer" colors, but it makes sense if they would make/import a few bikes in more subdued, single tones for those of us who like fast machinery but would be just as happy looking a little more sedate. If I could just get an FJ1100 with the clean paint of the '83 BMW R100RS, I would have replaced my bike already.

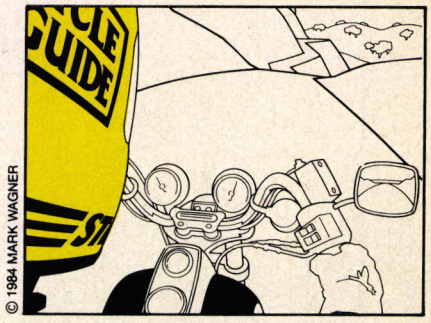
Gregory J. Miller
W. Redding, Connecticut

The motorcycle companies seem to be making bikes and scooters from 50cc to 1300cc, but the only real tourers are the big bikes, 1200cc and up. But I'm not ready for something that big, and really wish the companies would make smaller full-dress bikes. The GL500 was the right idea, but even it was too big, and it's out of production now. I'd like to see something like a GL250, or maybe a 400.

Wes Coleman
Etowah, Tennessee

What is the current status of belt drives? I have a 1979 bike that I'd like to replace in a year or two, and I was hoping that when the time came, I'd have several models to choose from. But with the KZ440 no longer in production, Harley is the only manufacturer of belt-drive motorcycles. It seems to me belts are an ideal alternative to shaft and chain drive.

Thomas A. Gates
Glendale, California



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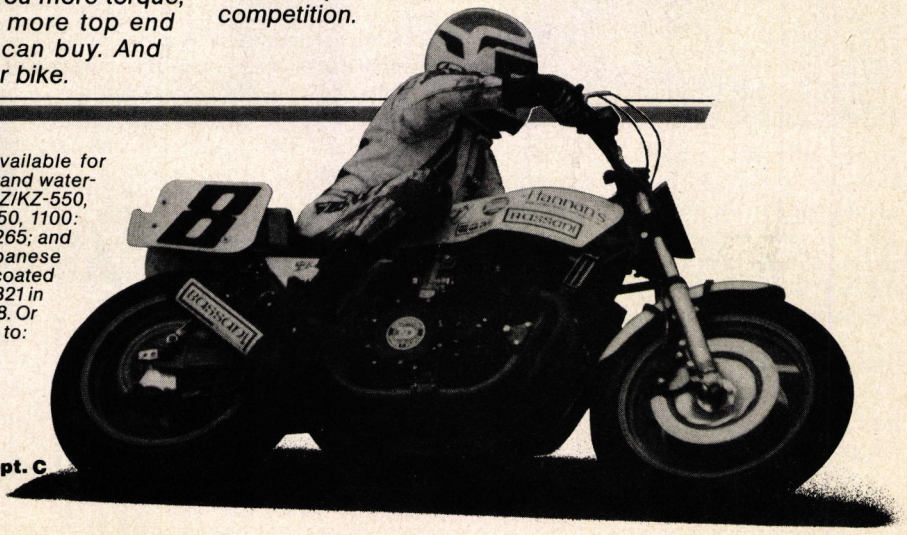

How to order.
Bassani Super Bike Pipes are available for ***Honda*** *CB-750F, 900F, 1100F: $265, and water-cooled V-4's: $280;* ***Kawasaki*** *GPZ/KZ-550, 750, 1100: $265;* ***Suzuki*** *GS-550, 750, 1100: $265;* ***Yamaha*** *Seca 550, 650, 750: $265; and many other performance-oriented Japanese multi's. Standard finish flat black plasma-coated aluminum. To order direct, call (714) 630-1821 in California, out of state, call: (800) 854-6228. Or send full price plus $5 postage and handling to:*

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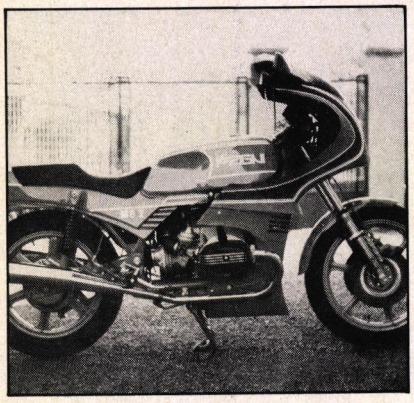
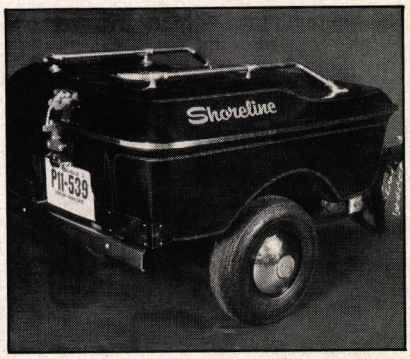
Prices subject to change without notice.

Motomart

Macy's for motorcyclists.

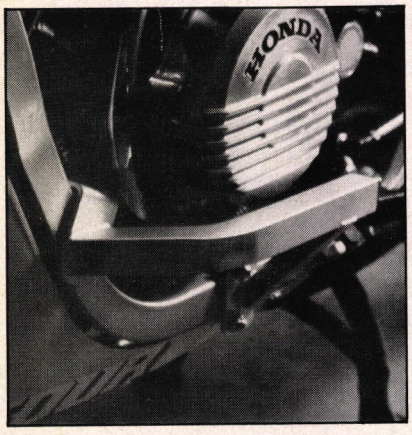
Italian-Style Boxer: No, it's not BoomBoom Mancini. The Magni BMW Sports chassis kit is a rolling frame and bodywork designed by Arturo Magni of Italy. For 1984, the importer claims that the fairing and bodywork have been completely redesigned, but that the "MV Agusta inspired" frame and swingarm remain unchanged. The kit costs $4150, and Brembo four-piston brake calipers are available as an option. For details on the Magni, contact Slater Bros., Dept. CG, P.O. Box 746, Kenwood, California 95452.





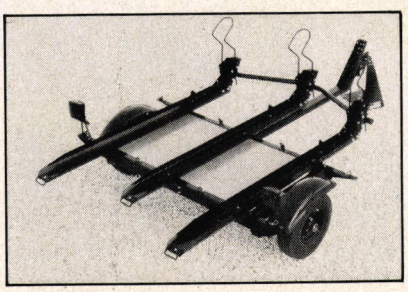
Take It With You: Just can't leave that kitchen sink at home, eh? If it's gotta go, the Shoreline Cycle Cargo trailer will take it. The Shoreline is made from gel-coated fiberglass and rides on a welded channel steel frame with leaf spring suspension. The standard model trailer comes with a lockable latch, weighs a claimed 140 pounds and has a load capacity of 300 pounds. Available options include interior floor carpeting, chrome bumper, spare tire and bracket, hubcaps, luggage rack and tongue stand. For all the details, contact Shoreline Products, Dept. CG., P.O. Box 848, Arlington, Texas 76010.

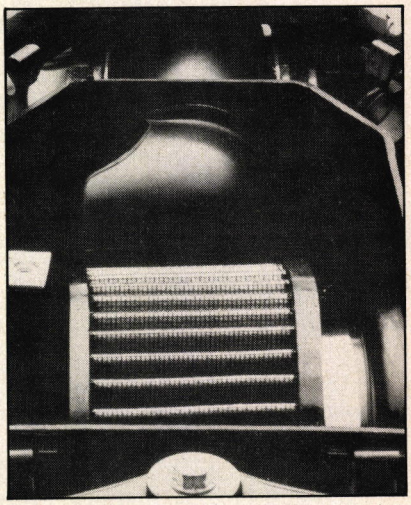
Waxed Wonder: The imported G-Mac waxed cotton suit is designed for enduro and trail riding, and is styled in the classic European tradition. The jacket features quilted shoulder/elbow pads and a corduroy collar; the pants have padded panels inside the knee, along with a reinforced seat. For weather sealing, the jacket has a buckle-adjusted collar and elastic sleeves, while the pants have adjustable ankle straps. Sizes XXS through L cost $189.95, and XL through XXXL run $199.95. For more information, contact G-Mac Sales, Dept. CG, 7034 Winnetka Avenue, Canoga Park, California 91306.



Case Closed: GSM Interceptor Casesavers can help protect expensive engine parts in the event of an untimely tip-over. The square-tube, silver powder-painted guards fit 1983 and 1984 VF750F models, and GSM claims that the units do not affect ground clearance. Casesavers are sold in pairs and include all mounting hardware. List price is $49.95. For more specifics, contact Graham Sheet Metal, Dept. CG, 13026 Raymer Street, North Hollywood, California 91605.

Tow Your Trio: The maker of the Tuff 'n Lite three-bike trailer claims that this model can be loaded by one person because of its adjustable support system that holds bikes upright while you tie them down. The MC-3A1 also features a plywood deck, adjustable tongue height and a two-year limited warranty. Maximum load capacity is 1180 pounds, and each rail can accommodate motorcycles with up to 60-inch wheelbases. Both trailer wheels spin on the Bearing Buddy Axle, claimed to provide long bearing life and to eliminate repacking. The trailer lists for $635; more information can be obtained from Unique Functional Products, Dept. CG, 135 Sunshine Lane, San Marcos, California 92069.





On Three, Breathe Deep: K&N Engineering now makes its Filtercharger air filter to fit the Honda ATC200X. K&N says the filter, which costs $18.84, could last the life of the engine, and will improve performance as well. For more information about this model filter, contact K&N Engineering, Dept CG, 561 Iowa Avenue, P.O. Box 1329, Riverside, California 92502.

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FOR THE 2ND TIME IN 1984, CYCLE GUIDE IS GIVING AWAY TWO GRAND PRIZES—WIN THE FULL-DRESS TOURING BIKE OF YOUR CHOICE

2 GRAND PRIZES

THE FULL-DRESS TOURING BIKE OF YOUR CHOICE:

- **HARLEY-DAVIDSON FLT CLASSIC** Probably the best 2-wheeled sightseeing platform ever built. It allows you to effortlessly cruise the Superslab in classic American style and comfort.
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4 FIRST PRIZES

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10 SECOND PRIZES

CHOICE OF:

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- **HONDA VF500F INTERCEPTOR** The instant you climb aboard, you feel—and act—like Freddie Spencer, World Champion roadracer.
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- **YAMAHA RD350LC** They call it the Kenny Roberts Special—and for good reason: It's a street-legal roadracer that even King Kenny could enjoy.

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- **HONDA CR250R** Able to make a winner out of almost anyone.
- **KAWASAKI KX250** A product of Team Green's Supercross succes
- **YAMAHA YZ250** The kind of horsepower you'd expect only from an Open-class machine.
- **SUZUKI RM250** Barnett rode it last year; now it's your turn.

ENDURO

- **KAWASAKI KDX200** If you can't do it on this bike, you can't do it at all.
- **HONDA XR200R** No longer just a playbike, but a serious enduro race
- **YAMAHA IT200** Bigger, faster and ready to do battle with anything in its class.

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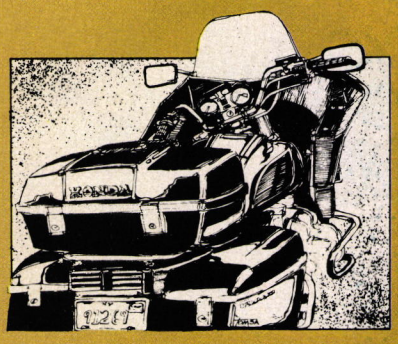

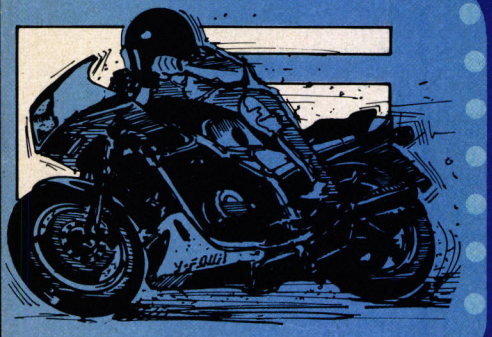

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ENTER TODAY—

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2. All prizes will be awarded in a drawing to be held under the supervision of an independent Certified Public Accountant before January 11, 1985. Decisions of the Judges are final. Winners will be notified by mail within 30 days of Drawing.

3. All entries must be postmarked by November 30, 1984 and received by December 14, 1984 to be eligible for Drawing.

4. You may win one of a total of 491 prizes — 2 Grand Prizes, 4 First Prizes, 10 Second Prizes, 25 Third Prizes, 50 Fourth Prizes, 100 Fifth Prizes, 300 Sixth Prizes. All are guaranteed to be awarded.

5. Only 1 Major Prize per household. Prizes based upon availability at participating dealer. Substitution upon mutual agreement of prize winner and participating dealer for motorcycle of equal value. Sales tax is the sole responsibility of prize winner.

6. **CYCLE GUIDE'S ALL NEW 1984 SUPER $60,000 SWEEPSTAKES** State and Local laws apply; void where prohibited. Employees of Cycle Guide Publications, their families and their respective agencies and affiliates are not eligible.

7. A partial list of prize winners will be available after March 1, 1985.

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ALL-TERRAIN VEHICLE

- **HONDA ATC200X**
  Competition-level handling combined with four-stroke ridability.
- **KAWASAKI KXT250 TECATE**
  The machine most likely to get to the checkered flag first.
- **SUZUKI LT185E QUADRUNNER**
  The fourth wheel adds a whole new dimension in stability and versatility.
- **YAMAHA TRI-MOTO 200EL**
  An all-time high in ease of operation thanks to electric starting and shaft drive.

25 THIRD PRIZES

BELL LTD HELMETS For the ultimate in safety and comfort. The top of the line street helmet from the world's most famous helmet maker.

50 FOURTH PRIZES

CHASE HARPER COMPAC 1150 TANK BAG A whopping 1,150 cubic inches of useful space, with a separate foam protected compartment, detachable map case, convenient coin pouch, and quick-release mounting; made of durable, water-resistant 11 oz. nylon.

100 FIFTH PRIZES

MOTO-X-FOX STREETPAWS GLOVES
The finest lightweight riding gloves made. Soft glove leather combined with nylon stretch finger sidepanels, draft-free extra-long cuffs, and Velcro wrist straps for a secure fit.

300 SIXTH PRIZES

ECLIPSE NIGHT RIDER A bright, flashing warning light to ward off the traffic. Powered by wafer-thin batteries, it's less than 4" x 3-1/2" x 1." Visible for hundreds of feet in any conditions.

ROAD TEST:

Harley-Davidson FXRT Sport Glide

A Saturday-night rumbler dressed for a Sunday ride.

BY PAUL VAN ZUYLE

Continued

ACTION PHOTOGRAPHY © 1984 DAVID DEWHURST

Last year was a turning point for Harley-Davidson. First, the company won a United States International Trade Commission (ITC) decision for a five-year tariff on imported motorcycles displacing more than 700cc. Second, H-D unveiled the V² Evolution engine, an updated version of the Harley-80 cubic-inch mill. Together, these accomplishments helped turn a once-stalled company around and point it toward the Eighties.

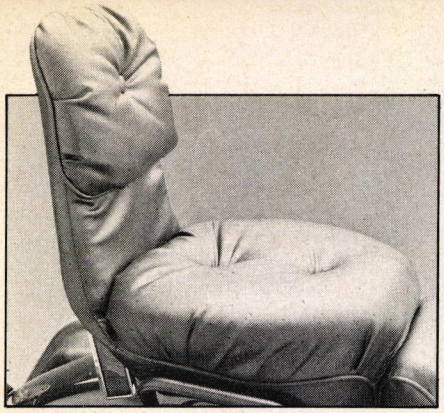
Elements of that turnaround include a plan to attract riders of what H-D euphemistically calls "foreign brands" (read: Japanese bikes) into the Harley pen. The FXRT Sport Glide is a key ingredient of this plan, because it is aimed at the sport-touring rider. Before the RT's introduction in 1983, sport-tourers had little to choose from in Harley's line of cruisers and full-boat tourers.

But to appreciate the RT, you must first understand that Harley's concept of a sport-tourer is vastly different from the traditional European interpretation. First—and perhaps most important—the FXRT is derived from a cruiser. The FXRT model has its origin in the FXRS Low Glide, the quintessential boulevard bomber—and it shows. The RT's upright seating position, forward-mounted footpegs and top speed of only 92 mph are just about guaranteed to frustrate riders with Autobahn fantasies. This is a

DETAIL PHOTOGRAPHY © 1984 VIC HUBER

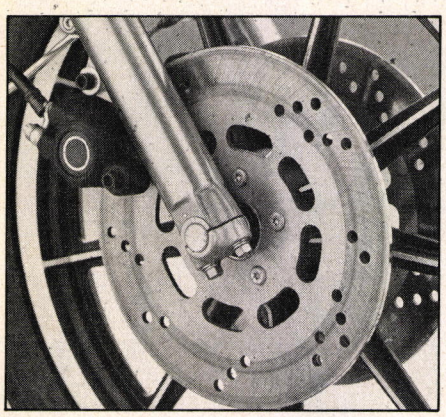
The 1985 V² Evolution engine is virtually the same as last year's motor

For 1985, evolution has become simply reproduction.



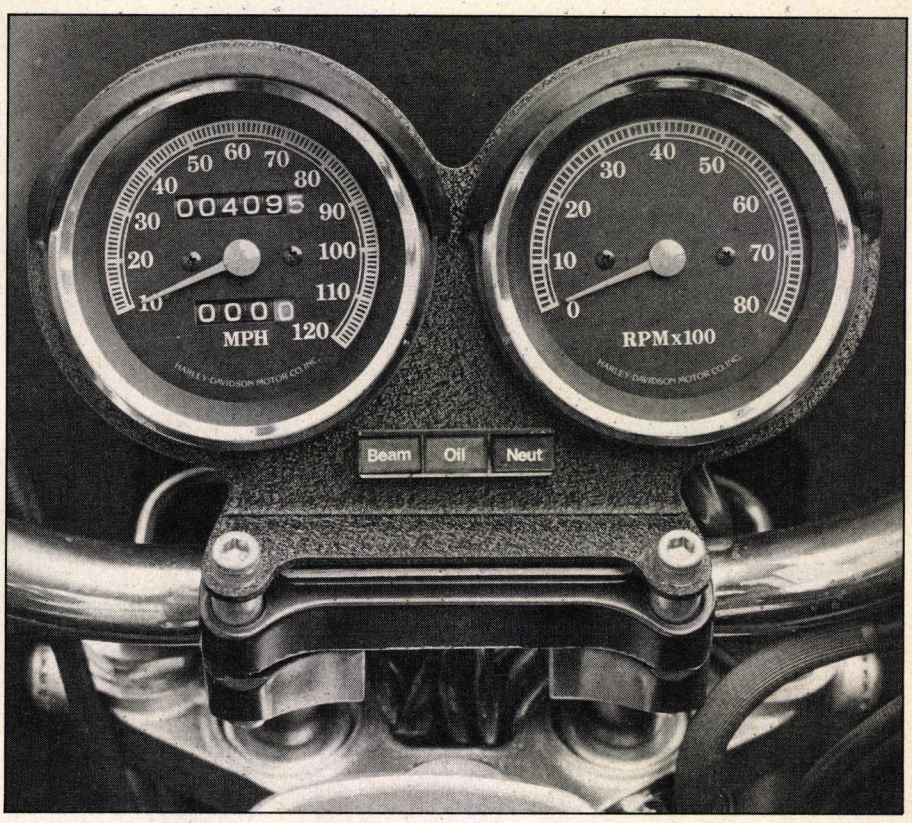
Passenger seat is larger for 1985

Backrest grew also, but not enough.



Added brake rotor improves stopping power

Two discs are better than one.



Harley-Davidson instruments got a facelift for 1985

The new speedometer showed a top speed of 92 mph.

bike intended for *American*-style sport-touring, in which Interstate highways and 55-mph speed limits dominate. And while this Harley doesn't fit the Euro-style sport-touring definition, it does fit Harley's: At the legal limit, the RT's low engine note, cruiser ergonomics and touring-bike fairing come together for a soothing, satisfying ride.

That's not to say the Harley is entirely out of place in the twisties. It handles suprisingly well considering its 640-pound weight and cruiser origin. But the Harley has too little cornering clearance and insufficient power to keep up with most sport-tourers on curvy roads, and even some big rigs, such as the Yamaha Venture, will leave the FXRT in their wake. The FXRT's cruiser chassis makes it feel most at home on the highway.

Harley didn't intend the FXRT to be just a cruiser with bolt-on touring accessories, though. In fact, Harley Chairman Vaughn Beals touted the '84 FXRT—not the company's FLT tourer—as being "better than a Gold Wing." And for 1985, Harley engineers gave their boss ammunition for his claims by endowing the RT with a host of refinements. Although the differences between this year's model and the '84 are not apparent at first glance, the result is a motorcycle that feels different from its predecessor.

First of the two major mechanical changes from the '84 model is a new diaphragm-spring wet clutch. The chief advantage of this switch is a considerable reduction in lever effort, particularly when the lever is pulled all the way in, as when sitting at a stoplight. In addition, the new clutch allows the use of a primary-drive cover that's 1 inch narrower than last year's.

The second change is the switch from enclosed-chain to toothed-belt final drive. The Gates Poly Chain on our test bike performed without a hitch, and required neither maintenance nor adjustment during 2500 miles of testing. Harley has put belts on selected models for the past few years, and for 1985, all five-speed V^2-engine models will get both belt drive and diaphragm-spring clutches. (See Guide Lines, page 25).

Several changes had to be made to the FXRT in order to accommodate belt drive. The most significant was a switch to an unusual rear suspension system, necessitated by the extra width of the belt compared to the enclosed #530 chain it replaced. Last year's RT used twin air shocks for rear suspension, but the wider swingarm needed to clear the belt on the '85 model would have caused the left air shock to protrude even more into the left saddlebag than it did on last year's model.

Rather than run a left-side glove box disguised as a saddlebag, Harley came up with the Air/Spring Combination Shock System, a complicated name for what is simply an air shock on the right, and a conventional (and skinny) coil-spring shock on the left. Adjustment for load is made on the single air shock. Although the arrangement seems likely to produce an imbalance of forces on the swingarm, the new rear suspension outperforms last year's version. The rear wheel is well-controlled over small- and medium-size bumps and in fast corners, and the system requires less than 10 psi (adjustment range is 0-60 psi) with a 150-pound rider aboard. The system suffers only from a lack of travel, and therefore simply can't soak up big bumps.

In the front, Harley's air-assisted fork helps provide excellent front wheel traction while offering the supple ride of a touring bike. The FXRT's air-spring anti-dive system (introduced in 1983) is needed more than ever this year, because the '85 model has powerful dual disc brakes on the front wheel, each rotor the size of last year's single disc (284mm effective diameter). The RT's anti-dive works by sealing off a fork-mounted air reservoir when the brakes are applied. During normal operation, the air reservoir is part of the fork's springing; when a valve at the reservoir closes during braking, the small volume of air in the fork

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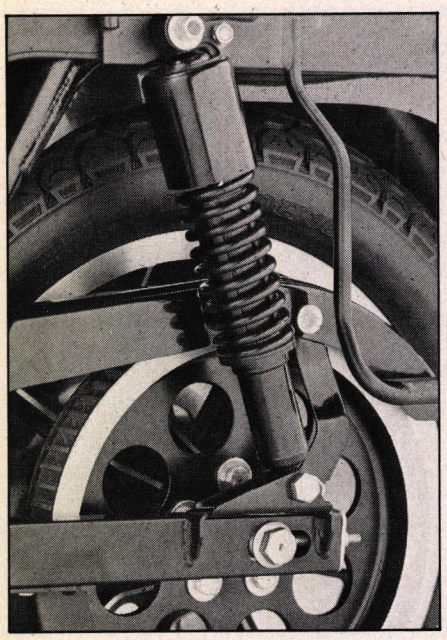
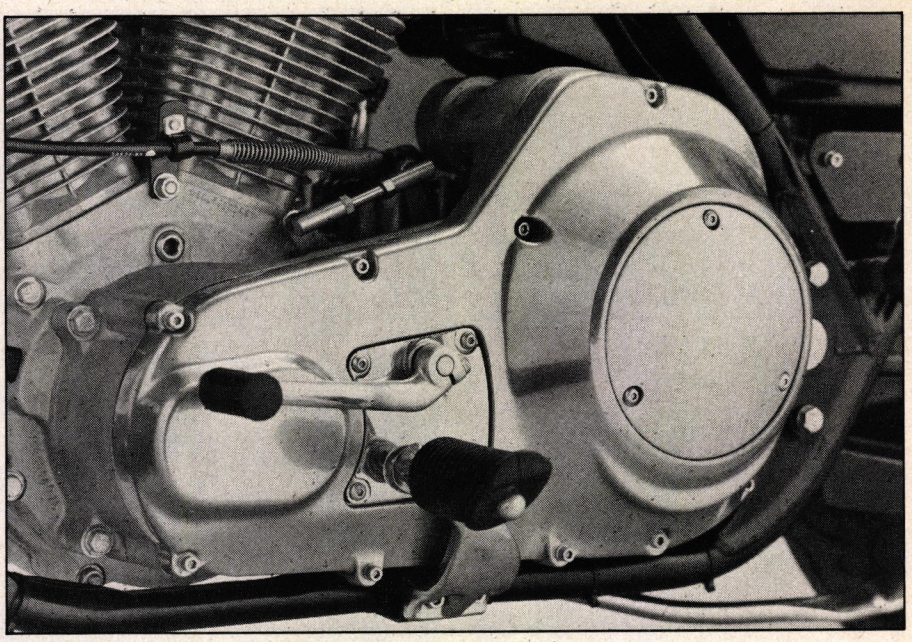


Belt drive and Air/Spring shock system

Power is unchained but well-restrained.



Primary chain/clutch cover is 1 inch narrower than last year's

And hides a new diaphragm-spring clutch that reduces lever effort considerably.

tubes is compressed rapidly, and firms up the front suspension. And unlike hydraulic anti-dive systems, which reroute fork oil through smaller orifices during braking, and merely slow front-end dive, Harley's system *limits* dive. Also, H-D's arrangement doesn't affect lever feel as most hydraulic anti-dive systems do.

Although the new FXRT's front brake requires less lever effort than last year's, the pull still is considerably greater than that required by most other manufacturer's brakes. Excessive lever effort has been a perennial complaint about H-D front brakes, but the factory is moving in the right direction. At the other end, Harley has arrived; the rear brake is entirely predictable and easy to modulate. Neither brake showed signs of fade, even after several miles of hard-charging downhill riding. But while that extra disc up front enhanced the bike's braking, it exacerbated another traditional complaint about Harleys: fork flex. The bike's long, spindly stanchion tubes provide a rubbery-feeling connection between the now-heavier front wheel assembly and the rubber-mounted handlebar. As a result, the RT steers imprecisely, and can run slightly wide at the exit of high-speed corners.

Otherwise, the Harley handles very well for a large bike. It steers slowly, but can be whipped from side to side quickly because of its low center of gravity and the leverage of its wide handlebar. The RT gives no hint of instability at any velocity, and cornering attitude is limited primarily by the low-slung sidestand on the left, and the mufflers on the right. The Dunlop Touring Elite tires stick well, allowing those cornering limits to be tested, and provide excellent traction on both wet and dry pavement.

Part of the Harley's good road manners undoubtedly are due to its modest horsepower output. And it's true: The FXRT's V² Evolution engine generates only middleweight-level peak horsepower by today's performance standards. But the RT's is always on tap; the engine can be lugged down to just above idle, and the power stretches to just below the 5200-rpm redline.

Although the V² engine is virtually unchanged from last year's, our '85 RT detonated at low rpm even on leaded premium gas—something we never experienced with the '84 motor. We suspect our engine was either mistimed, or suffered from a faulty ignition part. At press time we hadn't determined the cause, but we will report on it in a later issue. Also, on this year's model, the new preformed oil lines and primary case seeped lubricant from several connections and crevices.

Those problems, however, were offset by several mechanical improvements on the '85 model. Start up the FXRT and you'll notice its exhaust note is quieter than on previous Harleys—but it hasn't lost the distinctive Milwaukee rumble; new double-wall, fiberglass-packed mufflers are the cause. Not only was our test bike quieter, it was smoother-running. With the addition of belt drive, the bike exhibits excellent vibration control,

COMPARATIVE TEST DATA:

Make and Model	Quarter-Mile, sec/mph	Top Speed, mph	Weight, lbs.	Stopping Distance From 60 mph, ft.
Harley-Davidson FXRT-'85	14.180/90.36	92	640	126
Harley-Davidson FXRT-'84	13.928/93.65	112	639	140
Harley-Davidson FLTC-'84	14.603/88.75	107	774	152
Yamaha Venture Royale-'84	12.759/101.46	124	752	137
Suzuki GS1100GK-'82	12.579/104.52	137†	647	155
BMW R100RT-'82	13.862/95.13	126†	523	148

† indicates calculated top speed

Charting the Changes

Engine: New diaphragm-spring wet clutch replaces coil-spring dry clutch for reduced lever-effort. Inner primary case changed to accommodate new clutch. Outer primary cover 1 inch narrower. New clutch actuating arm and cable bracket. Final drive changed from enclosed chain to toothed polymer belt. Transmission case moved 0.5 inch to the right to accommodate wider belt drive. Starter jackshaft lengthened by 0.4 inch to fit new transmission case. Swingarm pivot on transmission case recast 0.5 inch to the left of previous position. Preformed, rerouted oil lines simplify hose arrangement. Oil tank has drain hose instead of plug. Fiberglass packing added to mufflers. New starter relay that resists hangup.

Suspension: Air/Spring Combination Shock System in rear (see test). Belt guards and mounts added to swingarm. Right fork slider modified to accommodate additional brake caliper.

Brakes: Second front disc and caliper added for a claimed reduction in lever effort. Rear brake hoses and anti-dive accumulator hoses are preformed.

Details: Instrument faces changed; speedometer now reads to 120 mph. Passenger seat is wider, and backrest is taller and wider. New wiring harness to accommodate new starter relay. Saddlebag locks now separate from latches. Throttle setscrew has large, plastic adjuster knob. Fuel tank and carburetor modified to comply with California evaporative emissions standard. Tank graphics and air-cleaner badge changed. Two-tone paint available at extra cost.

which contributes to rider comfort, and keeps the mirrors clear at almost all engine speeds above idle.

Also aiding ride comfort is the RT's well-designed frame-mount fairing. The fairing is unchanged from last year's, but the Motor Company had it right from the start. A still-air pocket protects the rider from his knees to the top of his head, and just a little wind ruffles his elbows. A windscreen tall enough for Wilt Chamberlain contributes to the sizable still-air pocket, but if you want to see over the screen rather than through it, Harley offers two shorter versions as dealer-installed options. As an alternative, the windshield could be cut down to size—as we did with our '84-model RT.

Like the fairing, the FXRT saddlebags appear to have been designed with function as first priority. But unlike the fairing, the saddlebags fail to live up to the promise of their appearance. The shock absorbers are the culprits; despite the new suspension system, the shocks require a deep cutout in the back of each bag, and consume nearly one-third of the potential carrying capacity. A weekend's worth of gear for one rider barely fits into the two small bags. This year's bags have locks that function separately from the latches, offering a more secure closure system. Fortunately, another option available for the RT is a travel trunk, which would be useful for anyone packing double or planning an extended trip on the bike.

There's one item on the RT, though, that's bound to become a sore point on any long excursion. The bucket seat effectively fixes the rider in one spot, inhibiting him from stretching out on the highway or sliding forward for corners. The saddle is also thinly padded, and the riding position puts a crimp in the pilot's spine that becomes annoying after a relatively short time on the road. Passengers, however, have it somewhat easier on the RT; the pillion is now wider and has a bigger backrest than on the '84 model. Passenger accommodations could be further improved, though, because the backseat section vibrates, and the backrest is still too short and angled too far back to provide much support.

Those few problems aside, though, the FXRT is pretty much the American-style sport-tourer that Harley set out to build. But it's more than that; in building the RT, Harley-Davidson avoided the kind of specialization that has yielded a steady diet of market-limiting radical cruisers and land-yacht tourers. In a line that's been dominated by two-wheel specialists, the FXRT is a general pracitioner, one with a broader appeal than other Harley models. And from what we've seen, the kind of medicine *this* GP practices is precisely the treatment Harley-Davidson needs to stay on its feet and healthy. •

Nits:

- Horn muffled under sidecover.
- Short range for a sport-tourer.
- No centerstand.

Picks:

- Accurate fuel gauge and speedometer.
- Hydraulic tappets eliminate need for valve adjustment.

Ride Review

• Sometimes I'm slow. I needed 2000 miles on the last two FXRTs we've tested before the bike's mission became clear. It isn't to swallow up continents whole, though the RT can. It isn't to instill mundane commutes with a sense of adventure, though the bike does that also. And it isn't to lure mainstream riders into Harley shops, though this big vee probably does that as well.

I'm not discounting those attributes; for some, they could be all-important. But I finally figured the FXRT's place in the grand scheme is to make 60 mph not only bearable but somehow *right*. At that speed, the bike falls into a satisfying rhythm, and all's right with the world. And lest you think making 60 palatable is a small feat, let me assure it isn't. In fact, it was completely beyond the bikes that generated the two tickets pinned to my wall. —*Larry Works*

• This is going to come as a big surprise to confirmed sportbike riders: The FXRT is a blast to ride on twisty roads. Other riders might spend their time cruising the bike and impressing beach bunnies with the Harley's good looks. Me, I couldn't wait to put the FXRT through paces I didn't think it could handle. Like a lot of sportbike-o-philes, I *had* a bagful of prejudices about how Harleys have limp-noodle frames, feeble brakes and Mack truck steering.

Those prejudices have been blown away. This is a mainstream motorcycle that takes to all kinds of street riding, including rides on winding country roads. Sure, the FXRT won't cause an RZ350 to hyperventilate, but the Harley is comfortable and fun to ride fast. I can't wait to take this bike on a sport-tour; the FXRT was made for it.

—*David Mallet*

• Until last year, I had yet to meet a Harley-Davidson I liked. To my mind, Harleys were inexcusably crude, great atavistic brutes that rattled your eyes loose with vibration and sub-par suspension compliance. In short, they were precisely the kind of motorcycles I could easily live without.

But last year I got reintroduced to Harleys, courtesy of the V²-powered FXRT, and I was amazed by its smoothness, tractability and—to a degree—refinement. And the '85 FXRT is even better; smoother and quieter than before, with the same attributes that allow it to give other turn-key tourers a run for their money. To be sure, the FXRT retains a certain quirkiness that gives it that indefinable Harley feel. But for all of that, the FXRT has qualities that *any* motorcyclist—not just Harleyphiles—can appreciate. —*Charles Everitt*

Continued

CYCLE GUIDE SPECIFICATIONS

Harley-Davidson FXRT — touring

MANUFACTURER: Harley-Davidson Motor Company Inc., 3700 West Juneau Avenue, Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53201

SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE: $8199 for solid colors; $8450 for two-tone

ENGINE

Type . . . . . four-stroke 45-degree tandem vee-twin
Valve arrangement . . . . . pushrod-operated overhead valves
Bore and stroke . . . . . 88.8mm x 108.0mm
Displacement 1337.7cc
Compression ratio 8.8:1
Engine redline . . . . . 5400 rpm
Carburetion . . . . . one 38mm Keihin butterfly-type with accelerator pump
Air filter . . . . . washable oiled foam element
Lubrication . . . . . dry sump
Starting system . . . . . electric only
Ignition . . . . . transistorized breakerless
Charging system . . . . . 12-volt; 264-watt alternator, voltage regulator/rectifier, 19-ampere-hour battery

DRIVETRAIN

Primary drive . . . . . double row chain; 1.542:1 ratio
Clutch . . . . . wet, multi-plate
Final drive . . . . . toothed-belt; 2.188:1 (70/32) ratio

Gear	Internal gear ratio	Overall gear ratio	MPH per 1000 RPM
I	3.241	10.935	6.73
II	2.210	7.456	9.88
III	1.603	5.408	13.62
IV	1.233	4.160	17.71
V	1.000	3.374	21.84

SUSPENSION/WHEEL TRAVEL

Front . . . . . Showa, 35mm stanchion tube diameter, brake-actuated pneumatic anti-dive /6.5 in. (166mm)
Rear . . . . . one Showa air-spring shock, one Showa coil-spring shock/3.6 in. (91mm)

BRAKES

Front . . . . . dual single-action hydraulic calipers, 11.2-in. (284mm) effective disc diameter
Rear . . . . . single-action hydraulic caliper, 11.3-in. (288mm) effective disc diameter

TIRES

Front . . . . . MM90H18 Dunlop K291 Touring Elite tubeless
Rear . . . . . MT90H16 Dunlop K291 Touring Elite tubeless

DIMENSIONS AND CAPACITIES

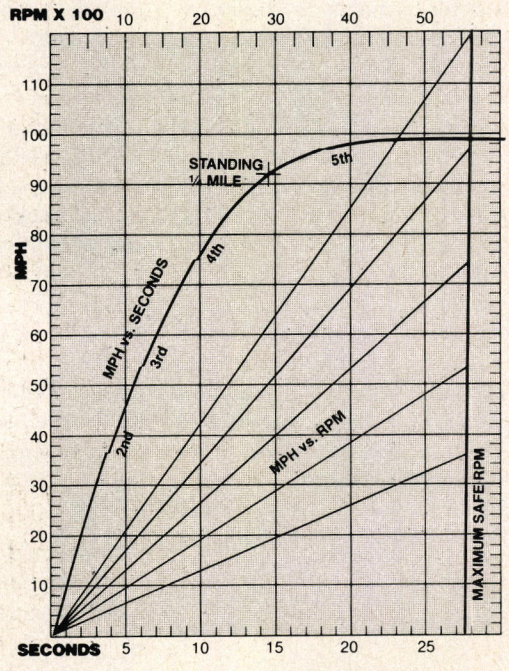
Weight . . . . . 640 lbs. (290.3kg)
Weight distribution . . . . . 44.7% front, 55.3% rear
Gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR) . . . . . 1085 lbs. (492kg)
Load capacity (with full fuel tank) . . . . . 419 lbs. (190kg)
Wheelbase . . . . . 64.6 to 65.9 in. (1640 to 1674mm)
Seat height . . . . . 29.7 in. (754mm)
Handlebar width . . . . . 29.5 in. (750mm)
Footpeg height . . . . . 12.8 in. (324mm)
Ground clearance . . . . . 6.9 in. (176mm), at sidestand
Steering head angle . . . . . 31.0 degrees from vertical
Front wheel trail . . . . . 4.82 in. (123mm)
Frame . . . . . tubular, stamped and square-section mild steel,double front downtubes
Oil capacity . . . . . 3.5 qt. (3.1/)
Fuel tank . . . . . steel, 4.2 gal. (16.0/), including 0.7 gal.(2.5/) reserve
Instrumentation . . . . . speedometer, odometer, tripmeter resettable to zero, tachometer, fuel gauge

PERFORMANCE

Fuel consumption range . . . . . 28 to 51 mpg (12 to 22 km/l)
Average fuel consumption . . . . . 42 mpg (18 km/l)
Cruising range, maximum . . . . . 118 to 214 miles (190 to 344km)
Cruising range, reserve only . . . . 20 to 36 miles (32 to 58km)
Speedometer error, 30 mph indicated . . . . . 30 mph actual
Speedometer error, 55 mph indicated . . . . . 55 mph actual
Best 1/4-mile acceleration . . . . . 14.180 sec., 90.36 mph (145 km/h)
Top speed (observed) . . . . . 92 mph (148 km/h)
Stopping distance from 30 mph . . . . . 38 ft. (11.6m)
Stopping distance from 60 mph . . . . . 126 ft. (38.4m)

WARRANTY: 12 months, unlimited mileage

AVAILABLE COLORS: Black; Candy-Burgundy-and-Slate-Grey; Candy Apple Red

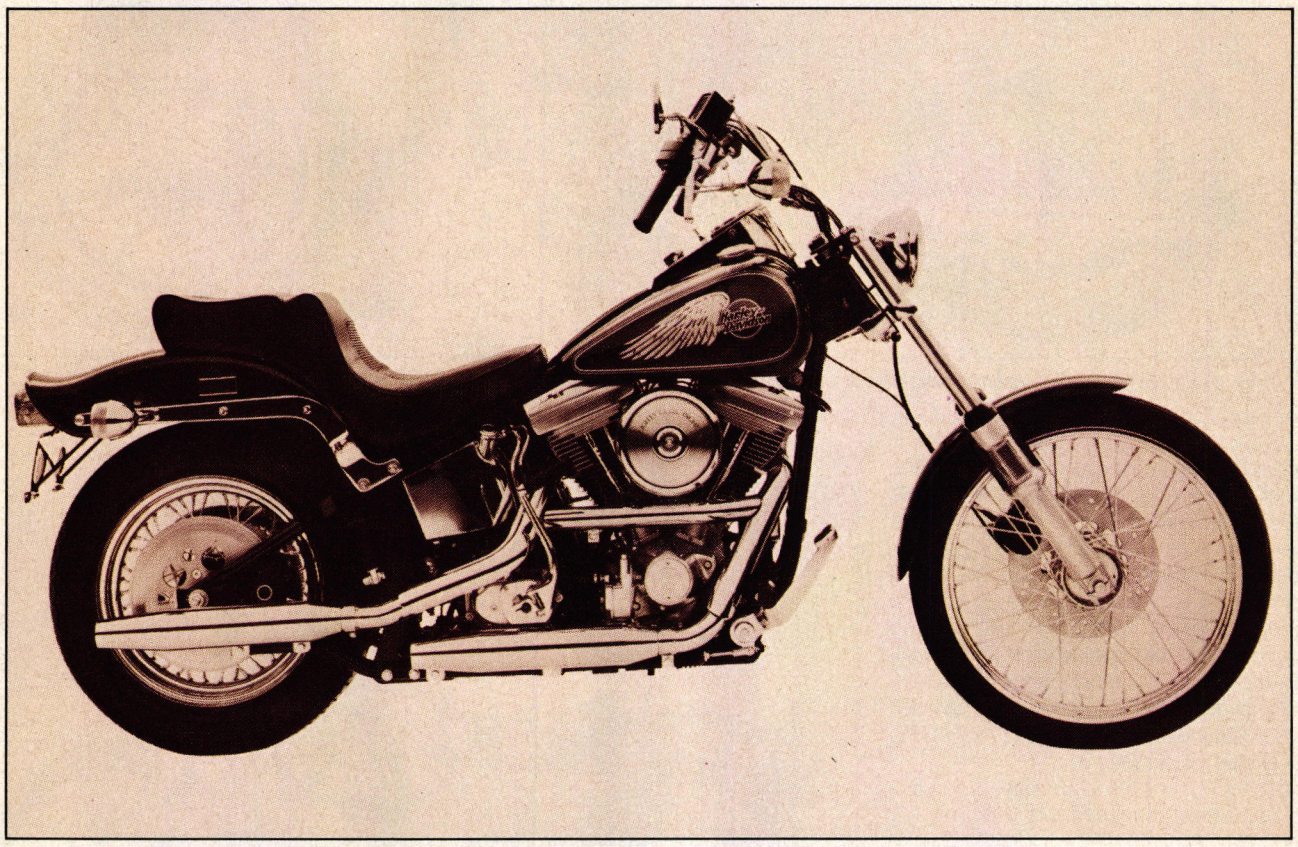


All weight and measurements are taken with machine unladen and fuel tank empty.

GUIDE LINES

Cycle Guide's Monthly Chronicle of Scoops, Tips, Rumors and Hard Facts

BY JOE KRESS



A little bit old, a little bit new—Harley's FXST Softail combines Milwaukee's tradition with its latest Evolution

As on last year's model, the Harley has an old-time starter.

COMING SOON

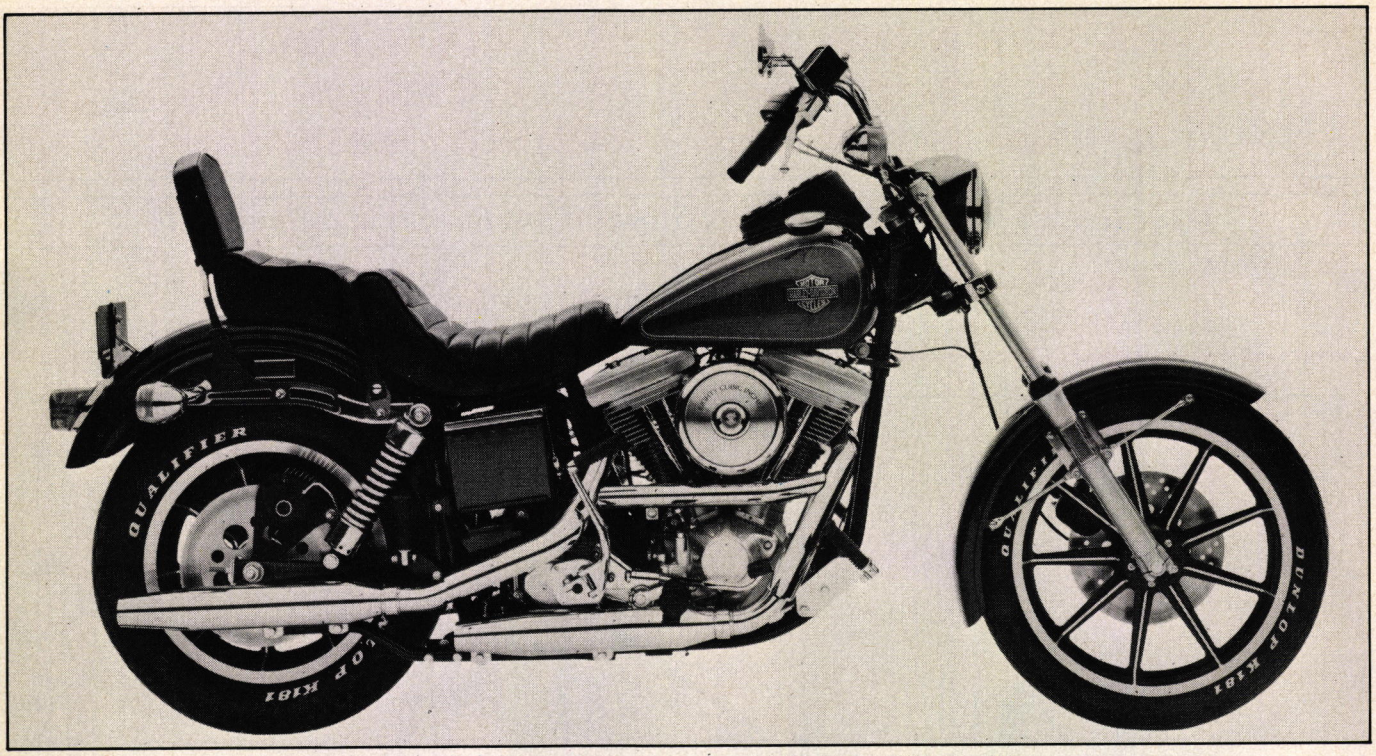
• It's become an annual H-D tradition: The Motor Company is first to introduce its new models, and this year is no exception. At a late-July dealer show in Reno, Nevada, Harley unveiled its '85 hardware, and, in keeping with another H-D tradition, the new machines differ only in detail—sometimes significant, sometimes not—from the bikes they replace: Evolution is an apt descriptor for the new Harley-Davidsons; no one invited to the show expected to see sweeping changes—and no one went away surprised.

• Although Harley is claiming only one new model for '85 (an FXRS variant with a Performance Suspension option), changes made to the rest of the lineup are noteworthy, nonetheless. Gone forever is the 80-cubic-inch Shovelhead; all Big Twin-powered Harleys now mount the V² Evolution engine. And belt final drive is now standard equipment on almost the entire '85 Big Twin line (only the Softail and the Super Glide retained their chains). All of the five-speed models, along with two of the four-speeders, now have a Gates Poly Chain toothed belt in place of roller chain final drive. To the H-D way of thinking, a belt is superior to any other final drive type—including a shaft. In fact, according to H-D promotional material, shaft-drive ". . .has no place in the two-wheel world." As early as '76, H-D began work with the Gates Rubber Company to develop a belt final drive. The first production application came in 1980 on the FXB Sturgis. Since then, Harley has used belt drive on its Wide Glides, Low Riders and the touring Electra Glides. Now, in 1985, the switch nearly is complete; belt drive is becoming a Harley-Davidson trademark.

• Harley-Davidsons also have kickstarters for '85—some of them, anyway. This year, all the four-speed FX-series customs (the Wide Glide, Low Rider, and Harley's best-seller for '84, the Softail) come standard with a kickstarter along with their electric starters. Harley's marketing department describes a kickstarter as a traditional feature on a modern motorcycle. The stylists wanted it simply because a kickstarter on a custom looks right.

• And last year there was only one FXRS; this year there are two. In addition to the standard Low Glide, H-D has that second version, out-

Continued

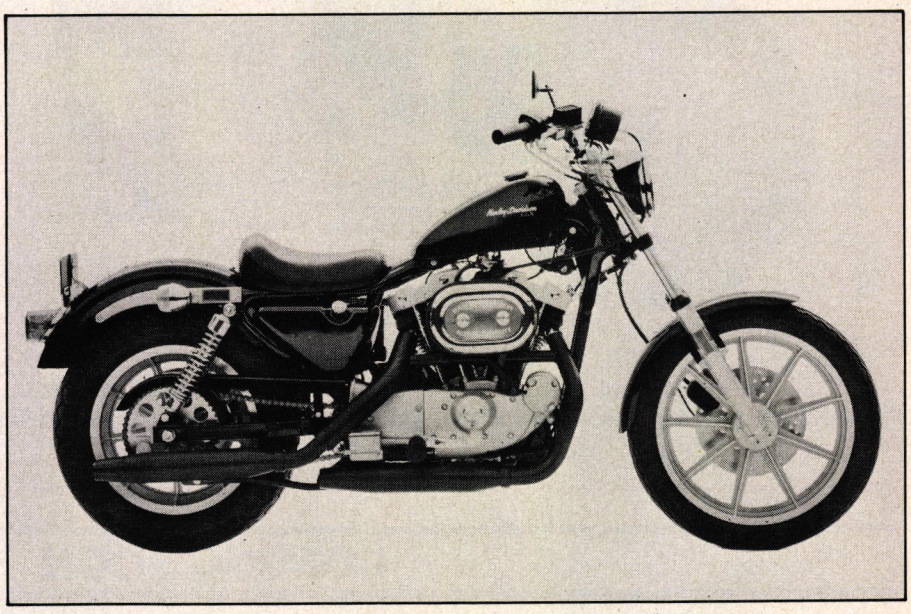


Belt-drive, Evolution power and pure custom looks are all standard equipment on the '85-version FXSB Low Rider

And one thing more: a kickstarter.

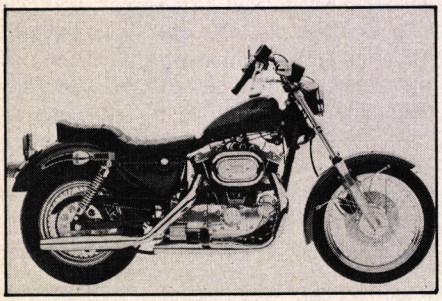
fitted with a suspension package to enhance the bike's sporting appeal. Included in this factory-installed kit are 2-inch-longer fork stanchion tubes and slightly longer rear shocks. The combination raises the bike's ride height a little more than 1 inch above a standard FXRS's. Differences on the two bikes extend to the braking systems, as well, and the "sport" model comes with twin, 11.5-inch front discs. The complete package adds 10 pounds to the standard FXRS's 575-pound claimed dry weight.

• Up in the 700-plus pound range, Harley has just two full-dress tourers this year: the FLT Tour Glide and the FLHT Electra Glide. They're both V²-powered, belt-driven and have five-speed transmissions. Hardly surprising, because beneath their styling differences the two big tourers are mechanically the same. The FLHT is traditional Harley, with a handlebar-mount fairing and auxiliary running lights, while the FLT is mid-Eighties modern with its frame-mount fairing, dual headlights and flush-mount running lights. Both now have Harley's air-adjustable fork with anti-dive and



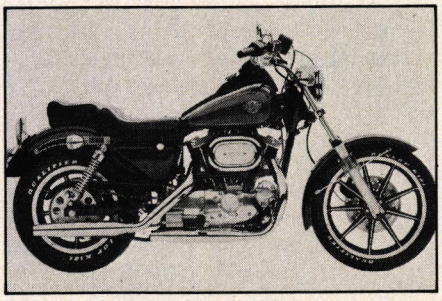
The least-expensive American-made twin has one change for '85: a 120-mph speedo

But then, the XLX-61 has never been long on options.



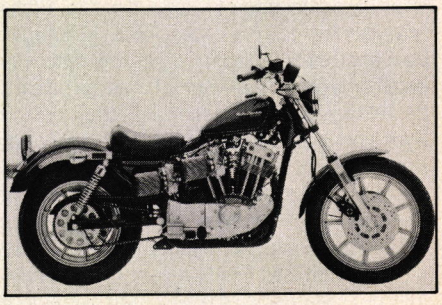
Traditional parts for the standard XL

Like wire wheels and a peanut tank.



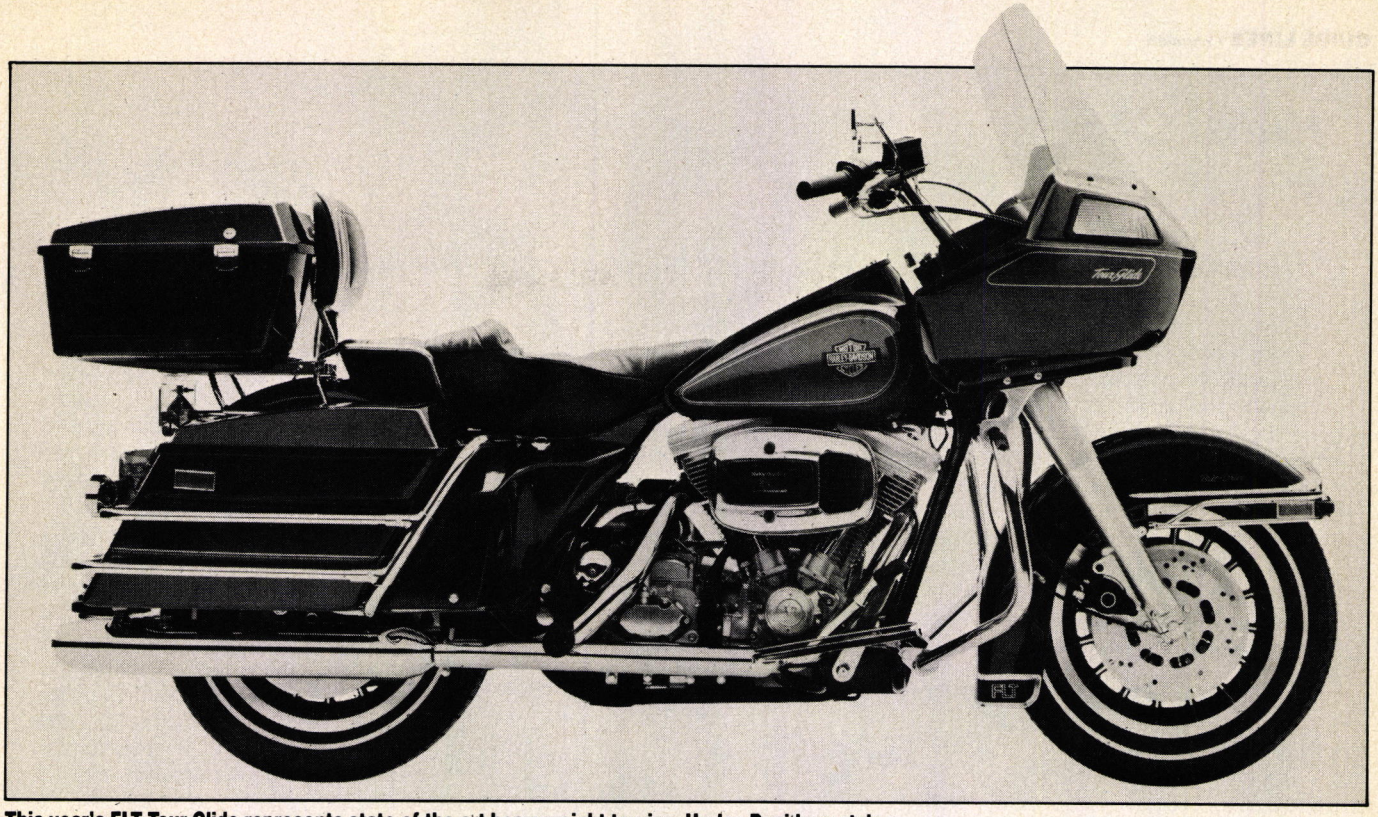
For Fat Bob looks on a Sportster frame

Harley still has the XLS Roadster.



The XR1000 has been discontinued

Act now while supplies last.

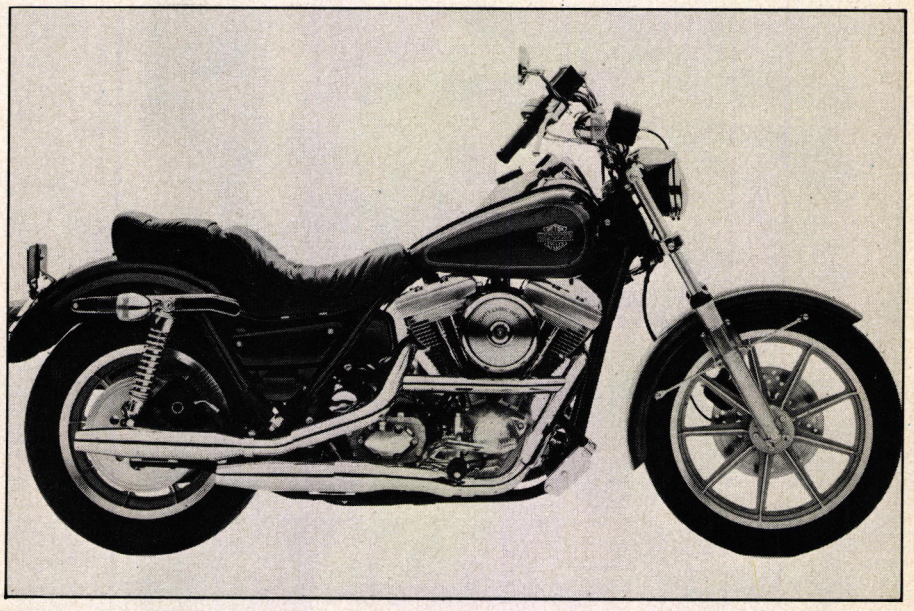


This year's FLT Tour Glide represents state-of-the-art heavyweight touring, Harley-Davidson style

The '85-version big-rig has V² power mounted in modern styling, complete with a belt in the back.

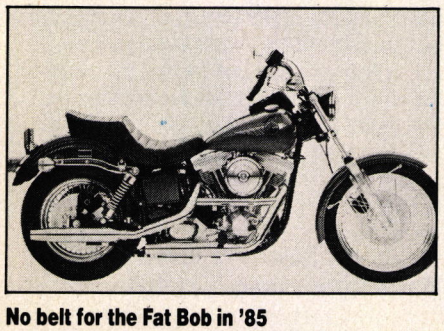
air-adjustable rear shocks. In the comfort and convenience department, these bikes both have relocated backrests this year for increased passenger room, and the Tour Pak luggage systems have revised locks for '85. Five color-options are offered for this pair of over-the-roaders, and if that isn't enough, Harley's custom-paint program makes any color in the rainbow available at extra cost.

• As the one minor surprise for '85, Harley is doing a little warehouse-clearing of its own this year. The hot-rod XR1000 is no longer available as a new model, but '84-versions will be sold while supplies last. For the rest of the Sportster line, though, the new-year updates are limited to detail changes: Restyled tank badges, new instruments with 120-mph speedometers and a star-shape, plastic throttle setscrew are now common to all Harleys. The only mechanical changes on the new Sportsters, a diaphragm-spring wet clutch and alternator, actually were introduced late last year as running changes on the '84 bikes. Evolution, it seems, pays no attention to model years.



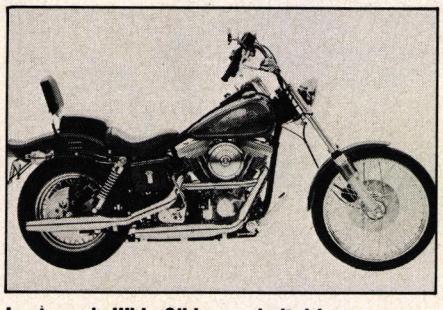
The belt-drive, Evolution-engine Low Glide has an added box on its option list

For the all-new Performance Suspension package offered for '85.



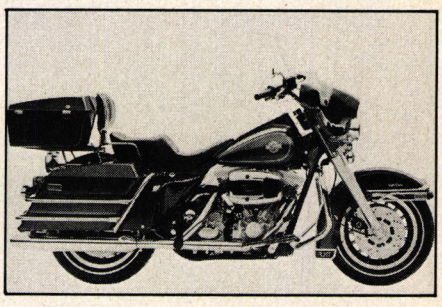
No belt for the Fat Bob in '85

It's the least-expensive Big Twin.



Last year's Wide Glide was belt-driven

For '85 it has an Evolution engine.



Old-time styling on a new-design bike

An Electra Glide for the purist.

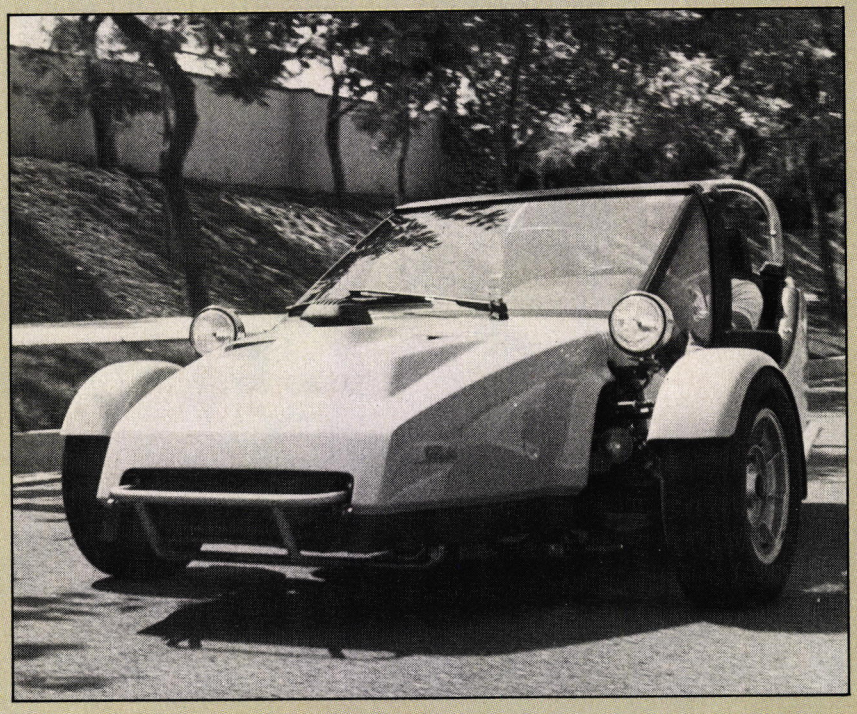
Continued

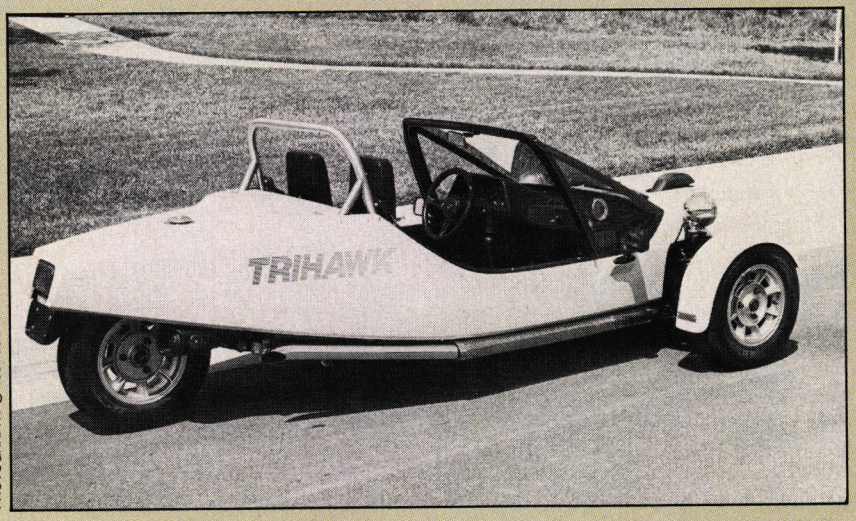
HARD CASH:

Harley-Davidson And The Trihawk

Milwaukee is back in the three-wheeler business, but this one's no Servicar.

• When Harley-Davidson's management announced its intention to revitalize the company and expand its product lineup, the company frontmen weren't kidding. Granted, Harley had to do *something* to justify last year's ITC tariff award, but this latest move is one not even the Feds expected: Harley-Davidson is in the car business. You read that right. Harley-Davidson has bought Trihawk Inc., a California-based company that builds two-seat, three-wheel sportscars. The deal includes the purchase of all the assets of Trihawk Inc., with royalty payments going to the former owners for each vehicle sold. According to H-D Chairman Vaughn Beals, Harley-Davidson bought Trihawk Inc. because Harley sees, ". . .a definite market niche for it (the Trihawk) between current motorcycle and sportscar offerings." Harley is betting that a lightweight, open-air three-wheeler will appeal to a new group of enthusiasts who would never consider buying a motorcycle, yet still want good-times, wind-in-the-face motoring fun.





PHOTOGRAPHY © 1984 JOE KRESS

And that's an almost perfect description of the Trihawk. Four years ago, Lou Richards teamed with racecar builder Bob McKee to build the Trihawk, an attempt to re-create the spirit of old-style sportscars like the Lotus Seven, a stripped-down English machine that was little more than a racecar with lights. The pair quickly learned, however, that a three-wheeler gave them a lot more design latitude, because government regulations consider it a motorcycle instead of a car. Hence, the Trihawk: a bare-bones sportscar not required to meet automotive safety and emissions specifications, yet able to provide a full dose of raucous four-wheel-style fun. And the Trihawk sold for $11,849, a realistic price for a moto-toy. Originally, Richards and McKee planned to produce 150 vehicles per year. After 18 months of actual production, though, fewer than 70 Trihawks have been built.

While Harley has hopes of bumping up that production number a bit, company spokesmen say the Trihawk itself will stay just as it is mechanically. Although there's the possibility of using ". . .some type of Harley-Davidson powerplant in the future," for now a 1299cc air-cooled Citroen Four and its five-speed transaxle will remain in place and continue to provide the power for the Trihawk. The number of Trihawks on the road might be low, but the car's critical acceptance by the four-wheel sport press has been high; high enough that Harley wisely is not changing a thing.

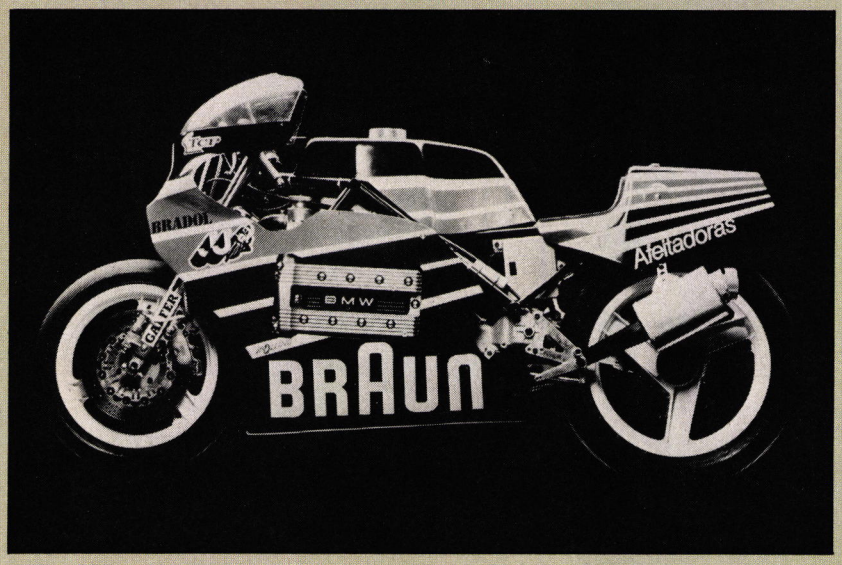
And don't bother looking in your local Harley shop for a Trihawk, either, at least not yet. While Harley-Davidson's marketing men study all the possibilities of the company's new three-wheeler, the Trihawks will still be built in Dana Point, California (34091 Pacific Coast Highway; (714) 493-3333) and distributed through an existing automotive sales network. And for the immediate future, all R&D, production and sales of Harley two-wheelers and its Trihawks will stay separate.

Lou Richards and Bob McKee felt America was ready for an automotive toy like the Trihawk. Harley-Davidson believes it, too—enough so to buy the company. Now, if Harley can get the production numbers up, and maybe the price down a little, we might see a whole new group of people behind the wheel of a Harley-Davidson. How's that for product diversity?

—Joe Kress

K100 CONTENDER

A Spanish special built around the new BMW.



• The upcoming 24 Hours of Barcelona will be the premier showing for this one-off K100-based endurance racer. BMW Iberica, the Spanish importer, working with JJ Cobas and funded by the European industrial conglomerate Braun, will put Carlos Cardus and co-rider Quique de Juan in the saddle. Although the bike's frame, complete with the Monolever rear suspension, was left basically stock, other changes have been made to set the bike up for the rigors of endurance racing. The stock K100 fork has been switched for a more robust unit with anti-dive. Wheel diameters also have been changed: The stock 18-inch front and 17-inch rear were swapped for a a 16-inch at the front and 18-inch at the rear. The brakes have been upgraded to Brembo Goldline calipers with a pair of 300mm discs at the front matched to a single 280mm disc in back. And the JJ Cobas/BMW should put those four-piston Brembos to good use, too: The bike's highly modified liquid-cooled four now builds to a claimed 120-plus horsepower at a new 9500-rpm redline. And when the power went up, this racer's weight went down; track-ready the K100 is claimed to tip the scales at less than 350 pounds complete. It looks as though the K100 is ready to take up where the old Rennsport twins left off. —*Joe Kress*

FEDERAL CASES

• After years of failed attempts, Florida motorcyclists finally saw their state's Senate Transportation Committee approve a bill repealing a mandatory helmet law for riders over 21. The bill was promptly rejected by the petitioning motorcyclists. SB429, the bill that would have removed the helmet law from the books, carried with it a few amendments hardly favorable to motorcyclists. One of its provisions was a requirement for all riders in the state, with or without helmets, to carry $1 million worth of accident and health insurance. Another required the courts to reduce any damage awards to cyclists who were injured while riding without a helmet. HB950, a similar bill, is still in the Florida House. That proposal, however, doesn't include the insurance requirement.

• Ohio's Highway Committee has approved a bill dealing with the ubiquitous moped. The proposal, HB169, puts many of the same requirements on mopeds currently applied to the state's motorcycles. Moped riders would have to pass an operator's test "as similar as possible to the motorcycle test." In addition, the bill requires riders between the ages of 14 and 16 to wear helmets, and that the mopeds themselves be registered and equipped with rearview mirrors. Additionally, the small-bore two-wheelers would be restricted to riding along a path within three feet of the right side of the road, unless making a left turn. A rider convicted of a traffic violation would have his moped license permanently suspended.

• In California, a dispute between motorcycle dealers and manufacturers has reached the chambers of the State Assembly. In a vote of 62 to 6, the Assembly approved a bill prohibiting manufacturers and distributors from selling motorcycles or ATVs to anyone not licensed as a dealer. The proposed legislation stems from a recent move by manufacturers to market three- and four-wheel ATVs through non-traditional channels.

• More news on the anti-55 front. According

Continued

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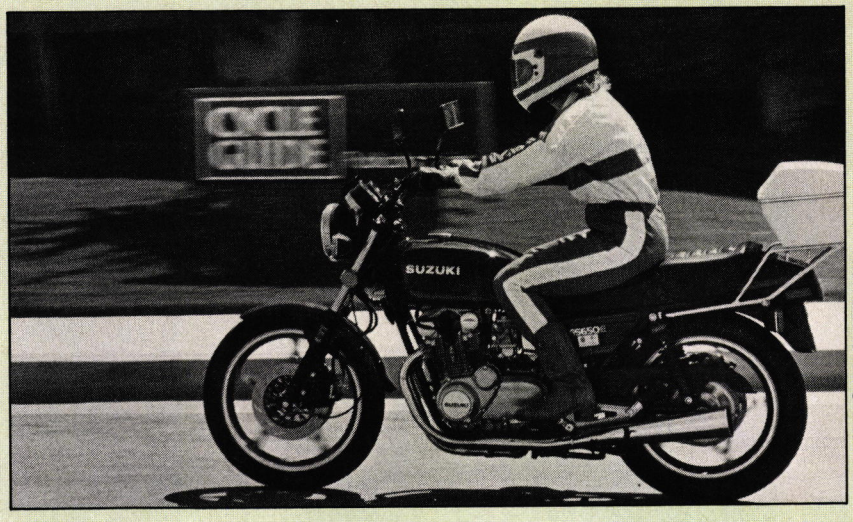
MOTO-OLYMPICS:

Born To Run

The 100-mile dash.

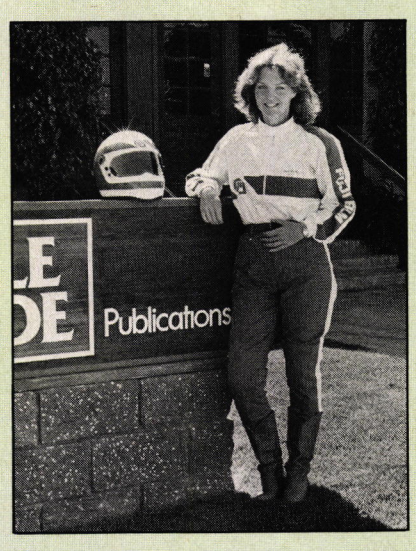


PHOTOGRAPHY © 1984 GILBERT LUNA

• You probably thought there were no motorcycle events in the '84 Olympics. Well, though the XXIII Olympiad took place without Freddie Spencer, Eddie Lawson or Anton Mang competing, Olympic motorcyclists *were* in L.A., taking on one of the most formidable opponents in the world—the California freeway system.

Fifty-five men and women motorcyclists competed in The Games as Born to Run, the Official Motorcycle Courier Service of the 1984 Olympics. Most of the BTR riders were UCLA students recruited by Clinton J. Choate, vice president of operations for Born To Run and a UCLA alumnus himself. Other riders included computer programmers, racers, a motorcycle policeman and even an air-traffic controller. BTR's 10 female riders all are members of Women on Wheels, a Los Angeles-based women's motorcycle club.

The service was employed by the Los Angeles Olympic Organizing Committee (LAOOC), and was sponsored by Fuji Film (Official film of the 1984 Olympics) and U.S. Suzuki Corporation (Official Supplier of motorcycles to the 1984 Olympics). The riders' event consisted of picking up press corps' film at the various event sites spread out over the L.A. area and delivering it to the Main Press Center on Suzuki-supplied GS650EZs—naturally, via the L.A.-area freeways (Official Parking Lots of the 1984 Olympics). Under normal traffic conditions, those freeways have an average speed of around 34 mph. But with an estimated one million athletes, spectators and support persons in attendance for The Games, the estimated average freeway speed was reduced to about 15 mph. The lane-splitting BTR riders averaged something significantly faster.



Born to Run was established in 1982, according to Choate, to provide a high-speed messenger/courier service to Southern California businesses, primarily by motorcycles. As the Olympic countdown began, Born To Run organizers John Sellars and Richard Wyler approached the LAOOC with the idea of using motorcycles as a quick way to get information from the sites to the various LAOOC centers and the Main Press Center. In addition, Fuji Film had a need for a fast delivery service for the 500-plus photographers who covered the events. Fuji set up the largest film-processing operation in the history of the Olympics, with a guaranteed three-hour turnaround time from the receipt of film. Fuji also supplied all the riders with green-and-white riding outfits (Fuji's colors) appropriately decorated in both Fuji and Olympic logos.

Besides furnishing the motorcycles, U.S. Suzuki Corporation sponsored an orientation/training session for all Born to Run riders to introduce the bikes and emphasize safety. While the delivery deadlines obviously were important, rider safety was an even bigger concern. And so, all couriers underwent the Motorcycle Safety Foundation's Advanced Rider Course prior to the beginning of the Olympics.

So, if you were in L.A. for the Olympics and wondered about the mission of those lane-splitters in green and white, now you know. They were competing against the clock so the world could see some of the events in their living rooms. And even though the '84 Summer Games are over, the athletes and the tourists gone home and the LAOOC disbanded, Born to Run riders are still out there, racing against the stopwatch. *—Gail Lawler*

to the Highway Users Federation, nine state legislatures now have, or will have, bills under consideration to repeal the 55-mph speed limit. States that are bucking the national double-nickel include California, Colorado, Idaho, Iowa, Louisiana, Michigan, Minnesota, South Dakota and Wyoming.

• But it's a race to Capitol Hill to see which voice will be heard first: states seeking to repeal the double-nickel or an industry trying to foster it. Experiments conducted by Nippon Electric Company of Japan could have effects in this country. NEC is currently working with a compound called ferrite, the same material used to magnetize audio tapes. Improved sound quality, however, isn't the goal here; enforcing speed limits is. The company has mixed ferrite with regular highway paving asphalt and rigged magnets to the brakes of test cars. When the cars reach a predetermined speed the magnetized brakes automatically slow it down without any driver input.

• And if your bike needs leaded premium, you might consider stockpiling; the Reagan administration announced plans to require phasing out the sale of leaded gasoline for on-road vehicles. Originally expected to disappear from the market naturally, due to the unleaded requirement of all '75 and later cars, leaded fuel still accounts for 45 percent of all gasoline sold. The primary cause for the unexpected popularity of leaded fuel is misfueling, using leaded gas in vehicles originally designed to use unleaded. EPA administrators, testifying before the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, indicated the agency's preference to see lead removed from gasoline through EPA regulations. Failing that, look for a Senate bill proposing an outright ban on leaded fuel for highway use, to take effect after 1988.

HARD CASH

• The European metalworkers strike that brought a halt to BMW motorcycle production (Guide Lines, September '84) has reached a

End Of An Era

The last Electra Glide.

• What might be the longest continuous production run in two-wheel history has come to an end. The event took place on June 4, 1984, when the final Harley-Davidson Electra Glide rolled off the York, Pennsylvania, assembly line.

For nearly seven decades, a Harley 74 has been a cornerstone in American motorcycling. Although the first actual "Glide"-series Harley was the 1948 Hydra Glide, a 74-cubic-inch twin with hydraulic lifters and a hydraulically damped fork, the Glide's roots trace back to 1922 and H-D's first 74-cubic-inch, 45-degree twin. In 1958, with the addition of a swingarm rear suspension and twin oil-damped shocks, the Hydra Glide became the Duo Glide, and in 1965 a 12-volt electric-starting system was added and the bike became the Electra Glide. The Glide's history isn't all saddlebags and fairings, either: In 1971, the machine served as the basis for the Super Glide, the first factory custom. That lengthy history notwithstanding, the Electra Glide is being replaced with the Evolution engine-powered Tour Glide as the factory's touring standard.

The Electra Glide's passing isn't going unnoticed, however; to commemorate the bike's pivotal role in H-D history, 1250 Special Edition FLHX Electra Glides and 500 FLHS sport-version Glides have been built, to be distributed to dealers in the U.S. and Canada. With evolution and diversification as the bywords at Harley-Davidson today, the era of the Electra Glide clearly is over—but not forgotten.

—Joe Kress

tentative settlement. Although certain terms of the agreement have yet to be ratified by the union membership, the metalworkers are back at work. BMW, again able to receive needed supplies, has restarted its production line. Shipments of liquid-cooled K100 Fours are expected in the U.S. shortly.

• Suzuki is expanding its production base, by launching a joint-venture engine-building plant with PT Mushyawarah Cipta Suara, of Jakarta, Indonesia. The new plant, scheduled to produce 100,000 motorcycle engines and 35,000 automobile powerplants in its first year, will start up in July 1985. Suzuki forecasts that within five years the plant's annual production will be up to 250,000 motorcycle motors and 50,000 automobile engines.

• More news on the Yamaha/Ford technical exchange we reported earlier this year. A deal has been struck with Yamaha to design and build cylinder heads for the U.S. automaker. Yamaha's contribution most likely will be DOHC four-valve heads for a 1.8-liter fuel-injected Four to power '87-model Ford cars.

• Don't start looking for a new Triumph just yet. Racing Spares, the English company licensed to build the classic British Twin (Guide Lines, March '84) reportedly has run into a snag meeting its mid-summer '84 production schedule. The company planned a few engineering changes for the bikes, but producing crankshafts compatible with those changes proved to be impossible with the original Triumph crankshaft tooling. The need for new production machinery most likely will postpone the debut of the resurrected Racing Spares-built Triumph until early next year.

• Following hot on the track of Dunlop's announcement of its radial tires being chosen as standard equipment on certain U.S.-market heavyweight motorcycles comes a similar announcement from Bridgestone Tire Company. According to Bridgestone spokesmen, development of the R 104 radial tire began in 1982, which would make Bridgestone a pioneer in the two-wheel radial field. The application isn't targeted at high-mileage tourers, though. Reportedly, the Bridgestone R 104 radial will be standard equipment on Honda's street-racer VF1000R in the European high-performance market.

• In another tire item, Dunlop reportedly is going to court. The company contends that Lien Shin, a Taiwanese tire manufacturer, has copied the look and design of the Dunlop K291 Touring Elite and the K391 Sport Elite tires, and is marketing the lookalikes in the U.S. Dunlop spokesmen note that the Touring Elite and Sport Elite are the best-selling replacement tires in this country, and they say the company will use all means available to prevent imitations from reaching the aftermarket and jeopardizing that position.

• And legendary motorcycle stuntman Evel Knievel reportedly is coming out of retirement, if only briefly. Teamed with his son Robbie (aka Evel II), the pair will attempt a vault of 19 buses at a jump-off slated for later this year. The younger Knievel would do well to pay attention: While the risks are high (Evel the original has broken more than 400 bones during his career), motorcycle stuntwork on a grand scale can offer huge payoffs. Knievel claims to have grossed more than $200 million over the years from his stunts, promotions and endorsements. Having a line of toys named after him, and collecting royalties on sales in excess of $400 million, wasn't a bad start.

Continued

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RUMORS

• Reconnaissance teams stationed outside Yamaha R&D report the company is moving along with efforts to shed its glitzy-cruiser image in the U.S. market. Indications are that the critically acclaimed supersport FJ1100 is just a first step toward that end. According to our skylight-snoops, Yamaha will have a few more FJ-like machines in its '85 lineup, including a sportbike in the 700cc-750cc range. Our men on the roof say this new Yamaha will be similar in styling, engineering and even graphics to the liter-plus hit of '84. Stay tuned.

• We're told Suzuki isn't resting on the success of its RG250 Gamma, either. In fact, our Suzuki-watchers swear there will be another two-stroke streeter in that company's new lineup, possibly even two. In that case, look for an RG400 for the domestic market and an RG500 to compete with Yamaha's RZ500 elsewhere. No definite word on engine configurations, but it appears a square-four would be a safe bet.

• From halfway around the world comes the latest on another new 750. Scuttlebutt has it that the much-talked-about—but still officially denied—BMW longitudinally mounted triple will debut at the Cologne show this year. The K75, as the rumor mill has christened this bike, should be available in all three traditional BMW styles: standard, RS and RT.

• And finally, it looks as if an era might have ended. Our MXers in the know tell us when we look at Husqvarna's two 1984 works racers,

What's works on Sunday sells on Monday

Husky's production single-shocker?

the GP250 and GP500, we're actually seeing 1985 production models. That's *liquid-cooled, single-shocked* production models. The days of the competitive twin-shockers from Sweden, they say, are numbered.

AFTER THE FACT

• When we contacted Mark Mulvoy, assistant managing editor for Sports Illustrated, to verify his statements quoted in this issue's Editorial, he did not deny them. However, he said that what he meant was: "Sports Illustrated would prefer to profile interesting personalities, but not cover events, because motorcycle racing has not generated the interest in the U.S. to warrant regular coverage."

• If you're the owner of a 1984 VF500F Interceptor, American Honda wants you to check that bike's frame number immediately. There's a possibility the Miniceptor's crankshaft could develop fatigue cracks and break if the engine is operated above 10,000 rpm. The fix is a complete engine replacement, done at the dealer level, at no cost to the bike's owner. This recall program is in effect through March 1, 1985. Frame numbers of the suspect bikes are: 001839—001876; 001879—002023; 002025—002071; 002073—002157; 002159—002358; 002360—002556; 002558—002779 for all the 49-state models; 000255—000584 for the California-only bikes.

• In the Guide Lines section of the August 1984 issue, we noted that Sears, Roebuck and Co. included Arthur Fulmer helmets in its line of motorcycling accessories. That is incorrect. Sources at Fulmer report that Sears has never carried Fulmer helmets.

APART FROM THE CROWD

• The dust has settled, the smoke has cleared and the winner is in: In the car-versus-

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Every showroom bulges with cruisers. Kicked-back laid-out machines. Some with new engines. Some with new styling. One with both. The Kawasaki LTD700. And it's the one that offers something that nobody else can... pure-bred Kawasaki horsepower. That's the difference. Horsepower backed by Superbike Championships and thousands of drag-race wins. A motor that grabs your gut and your mind. Shaft drive and a tough chassis let you use all the power to burst down
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motorcycle confrontation at this year's Great American Race, the car wins. Sorry. A '36 Bentley boattail roadster took the $100,000 first prize in the second running of that 3000-mile rally for vehicles built before 1937. After flagging off from Los Angeles, the Bentley crossed the finish line in Indianapolis just 4 minutes, 50 seconds off the rally's pre-established time. The bikes entered, all Harley-Davidsons with sidecars, came close but not close enough. A '31-vintage vee-twin finished 18 minutes, 42 seconds off the pace; a '36 Milwaukee-made two-wheeler was a bit over one-and-one-half hours late, and a 1926 H-D DNFed. There's always next year.

• Maybe a Blessing of the Motorcycles would have helped? Don't scoff; for eight years, just such an event has been going on in Colebrook, New Hampshire. Priests from Saint John the Baptist Roman Catholic church officiate at the annual ceremony, sponsored by the White Mountain Cycle Club. This year more than 3800 bikes lined up for the blessing and Father Albert Beausoleil's benediction: "O Lord, I thank you for the marvel of a motorcycle, alive and powerful at the touch of my hands and feet." Father Beausoleil also prayed that the bike's rider would achieve, ". . .the skill that will control it completely and wisely," and that the riders be, ". . .alert, courteous, patient and considerate of the rights of others on the road." Amen.

• Ever wonder where older motorcycle stuntmen go? Well one, 37-year-old Karel Soucek of Hamilton, Ontario, took the big plunge and became the first person in 23 years to go over Niagara Falls in a barrel. Soucek estimates he hit the water at 75 mph after his 176-foot plummet down Horseshoe Falls; he emerged with just a few cuts and bruises and a chipped tooth. All in a day's work, says Soucek. "I've hit concrete walls at greater speeds than that." Do tell. Soucek, apparently not one to rest on his laurels, says he's already planning his next stunt. This one, though, is on dry land, of a sort. He's planning a 475-mile motorcycle ride over the ice pack to the North Pole.

• The Citizens Coalition for Rational Traffic Laws (CCRTL) has fought the anti-55 battle mostly through legislative channels. But one CCRTL member, Leslie Bohls of Minnesota, advocates a slightly more direct approach, taking it to the streets as it were. Bohls' plan is simple: Make up a couple of oversized signs stating "55—It's The Law," mount them on the tops of two cars and head for the nearest Interstate. Once out on the highway the two sign-cars travel abreast at *exactly* 55 mph and let traffic back up behind them. After about 15 minutes or so, one of the drivers will open up his lane and let the flow of sure-to-be-irate drivers through, with everyone getting a good look at the "55" endorsement. Bohls' theory is that the average motorist, after being slowed down and seeing the reason for it, will admit that no one wants the double-nickel, and maybe it's time to do something about it—like change the law.

• High-dollar rallies have arrived. First there was the Great American Race, a $250,000 extravaganza for vintage iron. Now, movie stuntman Mark Saffles has upped the ante with his American Challenge, a four-stage, five-day cross-country event with a first-place prize of $1 million. The American Challenge, set for running in mid-summer of '85, will be open to all land-based vehicles. The actual competition rules are simple: The lowest cumulative elapsed time for the four stages wins, period. Saffles is putting a little spin on the ball, however, by requiring each team to complete a physical test or "challenge" at each checkpoint before getting the location of the next one. There's another little wrinkle for prospective teams to iron out before setting off on this Lake Tahoe-to-Florida high-speed holiday: the $10,000 entry fee. Saffles reports he already has quite a few entries registered, but says more are always welcome. So, if you happen to have a spare 10 grand and want to put it toward a shot at the single richest payoff yet in motorsports, write to Saffles at: American Challenge, P.O. Box 17642, Nashville, Tennessee 37217; (615) 320-0739. And then it might be a good idea to contact your attorney and prime him for a series of 3:00 a.m. phone calls to post bond for your speeding tickets. •

JAL, UNTIL YOU START THE ENGINE.

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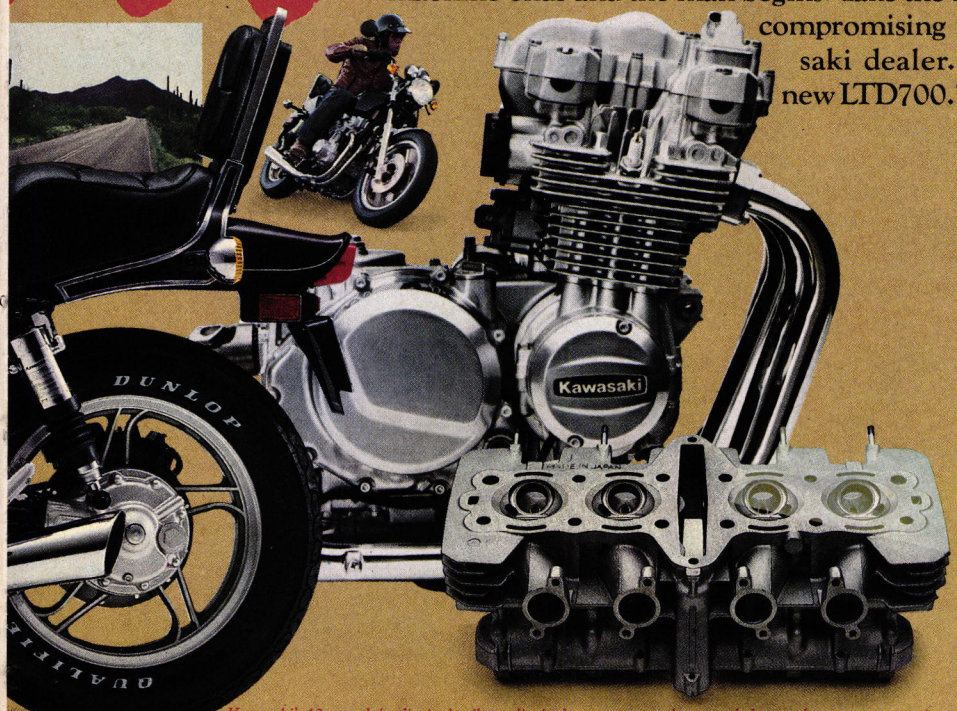


Kawasaki's 12 month/unlimited mileage limited warranty may be extended up to three years on major components with the Kawasaki Backup System. See your dealer for details.

ROAD TEST:

Suzuki GS1150ES

A big-bore sportbike well-schooled in the three S's: strength, speed and stability.

BY CHARLES EVERITT

Some bikes serve up a satisfyingly broad slice of motorcycling. Versatility is their prime virtue, and they simultaneously play such diverse roles as lunch-bucket commuter, straight-up tourer and serious peg-dragging corner-carver.

Suzuki's GS1100E was one such multi-dimensional motorcycle. And the 1100E could afford to hold the middle ground, because Suzuki also had the GS1100ES and the radical GS1100S Katana for those whose tastes ran toward more sporting machinery. No longer, though. The 1100E, ES and S are gone this year, replaced by the GS1150ES. So the 1150 essentially has to do the work of three motorcycles; because Suzuki hopes its newest GS can hang on to the E's middle ground, as well as appeal to sport riders.

But, if appearance is any indicator, the GS1150ES is a sportbike, first and foremost. It boasts a racy-looking full fairing, as well as a wraparound front fender that triples as a fork brace and an air scoop. The engine itself is a bored-out version of the 1100 powerplant, rubber-mounted in an all-new chassis with Full Floater rear suspension, a redesigned fork with speed- and position-sensitive compression damping, and a 16-inch front wheel.

It's horsepower, though, that dominates your first *riding* impression of the 1150; great gobs of horsepower, anywhere in the rev-range, anytime you want it. The motor pulls with relentless, locomotive-like authority right off the bottom of the rpm band, building to a breathtaking surge of midrange power, and only flattens out slightly as it reaches redline.

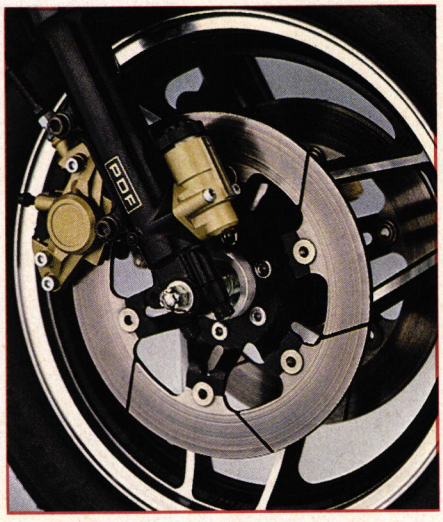
Continued

PHOTOGRAPHY © 1984 DAVID DEWHURST

CYCLE GUIDE
SUZUKI

That monster motor can be as docile—or as ferocious—as your right wrist tells it to be, too. The GS is perfectly content to potter around town at ridiculously low revs, aided by clean carburetion and immediate throttle response from its Mikuni constant-vacuum mixers. Slightly abrupt off-idle response, driveline lash and a reluctance to complete a series of downshifts take the gloss off the 1150 motor's otherwise polished civility, but in horsepower output and powerband width, the Suzuki's engine is brilliant.

Such eyeball-flattening engine performance doesn't come from an all-new design, either. After all, Suzuki already had the time-honored transverse inline-four GS1100 powerplant, and no one ever accused it of being weak or slow. For 1984, it was bored out 2mm, bringing its displacement to 1135cc. In addition, the entire inlet tract was enlarged, with a recontoured airbox feeding 2mm-larger carbs, 2mm-bigger intake ports, and 1mm-larger intake valves. Exhaust-valve diameter remains at 23mm, the same size used in the original GS1100. Intake and exhaust valves both, however, open 0.5mm more than last year's GS1100's. Providing that extra valve-lift are cams with retarded timing and both reduced duration and overlap compared to the 1100's.



PDF fork and new front brake

New, but not necessarily improved.

Suzuki spokesmen say the list of modifications were made to boost top-end power, yet still retain the low-end and midrange that characterized the 1100.

Not all of Suzuki's efforts went into making the big-bore motor produce more power; certain engine internals were strengthened to cope with the additional stress of increased horsepower, as well. The forged pistons, for instance, ride on 20mm-diameter wristpins, 2mm larger than the 1100's. The 1150's drivetrain is stouter than the 1100's, too, starting with stiffer cushion springs in the clutch hub, a return to pre-'83-style clutch plates (thicker than last year's 1100 plates), upgrades in both material and heat-treating for the transmission shafts and some of the gears, and a stronger bearing on the drive side of the countershaft. Primary drive ratio for the 1150 is fractionally taller numerically, but much of the rest of the engine remains the same, including internal gear ratios, the center cases and the crankshaft. On the end of the roller bearing crank is an '83 ES/S-style alternator, which is lighter and more compact than the E-model's. An oil cooler was added, too, for '84.

Also new this year are rubber motormounts at the front of the engine; unfortunately, the mounts fail to keep engine vibration in check. The big four's buzzing boils up through the grips, pegs and saddle at a variety of engine speeds, and smooths out only between 2500-3500 rpm, 45-60 mph in top gear. The engine also sits about 0.25-inch higher in the frame than in the GS1100E or ES, and farther forward, too. The forward placement of the engine, in addition to the bike's longer swingarm, gives the 1150 a heavier front-end weight bias than the

1100. Shifting more weight to the front end has become standard practice in building roadracing machinery, and the 1150 shows that Suzuki is making use of its GP experience.

On the other hand, the 1150's frame seems to owe more to road-going Suzukis than to the firm's roadracers. The frame, a collection of round- and box-section tubing with a single backbone and double front downtubes, is similar to those of Suzuki's recent 750cc and 550cc sportbikes. Also like its sporting stablemates, the 1150 has Suzuki's Full Floater rising-rate rear suspension. A single Kayaba shock offers four rebound-damping settings, and an infinite choice of spring preload settings within 17 turns of the remote hydraulic adjuster's handwheel.

Suzuki borrowed yet another item from its GP-roadracing bag of tricks for the 1150: A 16-inch front wheel replaces the 1100's 19-incher, yielding quicker steering response. But, unlike the 550 and 750, which received new, quicker steering geometry and reduced weight to accompany their 16-inch front wheels, the 1150 retains the steering geometry of its predecessor, and weighs more, too. Both the 1100E and the 1150 have the same steering head angle, trail figures within 1mm, wheelbases within 0.1 inch, and dry weights within 12 pounds (the 1150 is the heavier of the two).

Shock adjusts for preload and damping

Suzuki's version of dial-a-ride.

Those similarities don't indicate identical chassis components, though. The 1150's front fork differs from the 1100's—and those of previous Suzuki streetbikes—by offering compression damping that's both speed- and position-sensitive. As the fork compresses in response to bumps or hard braking, a spring-loaded valve closes to re-route the fork oil, stiffening compression damping. A four-position adjuster allows the rider to select different points in the fork's travel at which the system engages. There's also a blowoff valve that's supposed to allow the fork to respond normally to sharp bumps. Moreover, the system's anti-dive feature doesn't rely on brake-line hydraulic pressure, and as a result, the 1150's front brake feels firmer than those of previous Suzukis with brake-actuated anti-dives.

In theory, the system seems wonderful, but it leaves something to be desired in practice. The fork occasionally stiffens up abruptly in bumpy corners, which can cause the front tire to lose traction for a brief, heart-stopping moment. Plus, panic stops show that the fork doesn't reduce dive any better than previous Suzuki systems. Admittedly, the 1150's fork slows front-end dive when the brakes are eased on, but snapping them on quickly causes the fork to use almost all of its travel. Hard stopping also reveals the high lever-pressure the front brake requires. The new double-action calipers act on floating rotors, and have power equal to anything in the literbike class, but the effort they demand makes point of lockup difficult to predict.

During most of our testing, we left the

Continued

fork compression damping at its lowest setting to reduce the fork's effect on handling. But the 1150's other handling shortcomings are not the kind you can adjust away. To start with, the big GS is as stable as the Queen Mary—and about as agile. The bike's stability is an asset in ultrafast sweepers, where the rider can just pick the desired lean angle, pull the trigger on the big-bore motor and blow from corner to corner. But in the tight stuff, the bike's reluctance to turn becomes a big liability. True, the 1150 stays set on the line you choose through a corner, but getting in and out of corners takes lots of effort. You don't flick this motorcycle into corners, you arc it through, and that means you have to plan farther ahead, initiating corners sooner than would be necessary with any of the quicker-steering hyperbikes—which includes just about all of them.

The GS's suspension and tires also inhibit its effectiveness as a backroad weapon. With the suspension set for fast riding (No. 3 for spring preload and compression damping in front, and No. 3 preload/No. 4 rebound damping for the shock), the bike stays planted on its suspension over smooth roads. Stutter bumps and sharp-edged paving irregularities, though, can cause the tires to break loose, and while backing off on the preload at both ends diminishes that problem, the bike moves around on its suspension more than most riders will care for. The tires don't provide exceptional traction to start with; neither end of the bike feels particularly sure-footed at extreme lean angles. And although the 1150 has plenty of cornering clearance, most riders won't be tempted to use all of it very often, because the sidestand touches down about the same time as the footpeg does on the left, and on the right the centerstand hits first. Attempting to lean further while gouging the pavement with undercarriage bits carries with it potentially disastrous results.

Suzuki's GS1150ES has some shortcomings, then, that limit it as a sporting tool. And the picture doesn't improve much when the setting changes to in-town or freeway riding. First, there's the engine vibration to cope with. Plus, the racer-ready seating position forces a rider to support most of his upper-body weight on his wrists and hands, and if he moves forward on the well-padded saddle to let his back and legs take some of the strain off his wrists and hands, the wide gas tank can splay his legs uncomfortably. On top of that, the swept-back cast-aluminum handlebars force an awkward angle on the rider's wrists, adding to the discomfort. And while the fairing offers excellent protection and creates little turbulence, it also cuts the wind blast that would offer enough support to make the extreme riding position comfortable. As it is, only at 80 mph or beyond does enough wind curl over the fairing's screen to take the load off the rider's wrists. At full-tilt-boogie speeds, a rider might not notice the 1150's ergonomic failings; at a anything less than a full-race pace, he comes smack up against them.

Nor does the 1150 rate high in suspen-

COMPARATIVE TEST DATA:

Make and Model	Quarter-Mile, sec/mph	Top Speed, mph	Weight, lbs.	Stopping Distance From 60 mph, ft.
Suzuki GS1150ES-'84	11.268/122.44	148	542	122
Yamaha FJ1100-'84	10.992/124.48	146	535	121
Kawasaki Ninja-'84	11.181/123.62	146	523	126
Honda VF1000F Interceptor-'84	11.121/123.45	150	536	125
Kawasaki GPz1100-'84	11.312/120.80	145	560	120
Suzuki GS1100E-'82	11.203/119.30	141†	530	132

† indicates a calculated top speed

GS1150ES's 74.0mm bore boosts displacement to 1135cc compared to GS1100's 1075cc

And provides even more eyeball-flattening low-end and midrange power.

sion compliance. Admittedly, at Suzuki's recommended standard settings (No. 2 spring preload/No. 3 compression damping in front and No. 2 for both preload and rebound damping at the rear), small, rolling bumps pass underneath the big GS largely unnoticed. But the suspension reacts harshly to larger paving imperfections, especially so to square-edged bumps. Dialing the suspension back to No. 1 all around reduces the harshness, but can't eliminate it completely.

All of which leaves us slightly disappointed. With the GS1150ES, Suzuki has traded away the GS1100E's broad-band versatility for a narrow sporting focus. The 1150 simply can't match the 1100 in the number of tasks it performs well, and handles better only within certain sharply defined circumstances.

And if that comparison seems unfair, then consider this: Any one of the new-generation big-bore sportbikes offers more responsive, more predictable handling than does the GS, and only Kawasaki's Ninja comes close to forcing the rider to sacrifice as much comfort. The 1150 has a magnificent motor, but sheer horsepower is no panacea; it does nothing for slow steering, an uncomfortable riding position and a harsh suspension. And that puts the GS1150ES in the unenviable position of being neither as good as its predecessor, nor as capable as its competition. •

Nits:

- Fuel-filler opening is too small.
- Turnsignal switch is vaguely detented and doesn't return to center.
- Speedometer numbers are crowded together, making them difficult to read.

Picks:

- Adjustments for shock spring preload, rebound damping and fork compression damping are easily reached and require no tools.
- Turnsignals are self-canceling.
- Security chain and lock are included.

Ride Review

• I suppose motorcycling has tougher acts to follow than last year's GS1100E. Being the first rider to go out to qualify for Daytona after Roberts shatters the lap record probably comes close. Last year's GS1100E was close to being a no-fault motorcycle: fast, smooth and comfortable. Individual bikes could beat it in separate measures of performance, but nothing, absolutely *nothing* approached it for versatility.

Not so with the GS1150ES. Oh, it is fast—at least in a straight line. But the 1150 also vibrates unforgivably, rides uncomfortably and handles no better than the 1100—if even that well. This is not progress. If my favorite road were 1320 feet long and as straight as a rifle-shot, perhaps I wouldn't feel so badly about the ES. But it isn't; and I do.

—Larry Works

• I'm a small guy, and I don't like big motorcycles—or big people—intimidating me with their size. This year, I've had many opportunities to be bullied by huge new bikes, but most of them have turned out to be gentle giants. Unfortunately, the biggest Suzuki is not so friendly. Right away, it let me know who was in charge, forcing me to stretch out over the gas tank and splaying my legs uncomfortably with its wide seat. Larger riders might find a tolerable position atop the GS1150, but I could not get comfortable.

When I tried to conquer the 1150 by flogging it around corners, the big bike ruthlessly retaliated by slamming hard chassis parts into the pavement, turning fun into fear. The Suzuki has a powerful heart of gold, but its personality has been warped by great weight and poor suspension. *—Paul Van Zuyle*

• This is progress? Suzuki took one of the best all-round literbikes, last year's GS1100E, and turned it into *this?* Maybe I'm wrong, but I always thought that the hackneyed phrase for each-year's offering was "new and improved." This garish piece of hardware certainly is new, but I fail to see the improved.

Last year's E-model could handle anything from commuting to sport riding; the main difference was how far you twisted the right grip. But the 1150 defies my attempts at fast riding, and compared with other liter-class sportbikes, I feel as if I'm working twice as hard to go half as fast. And despite the bike's gargantuan size, the riding position is cramped, and as uncomfortable as a proctologist's examining table. If this is progress, thanks, but I'll stick with the past. *—Jim Miller*

CYCLE GUIDE SPECIFICATIONS

Suzuki GS1150ES — street

IMPORTER: U.S. Suzuki Motor Corporation, 3251 East Imperial Highway, Brea, California 92621

SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE: $4785

ENGINE

Type . . . . . four-stroke transverse vertical four
Valve arrangement . . . . . .double overhead camshafts, four valves per cylinder
Bore and stroke . . . . . 74.0mm x 66.0mm
Displacement 1135.4cc
Compression ratio 9.7:1
Engine redline . . . . . 9000 rpm
Carburetion . . . . . .four 36mm Mikuni constant-vacuum
Air filter . . . . . disposable paper element
Lubrication . . . . . .wet sump
Starting system . . . . . electric only
Ignition . . . . . .transistorized breakerless
Charging system . . . . . .12-volt; 294-watt alternator, voltage regulator/rectifier, 14-ampere-hour battery

DRIVETRAIN

Primary drive . . . . . .helical gears; 1.780:1 ratio
Clutch . . . . . wet, multi-plate
Final drive . . . . . .#630 O-ring chain (¾-in. pitch, ⅜-in. width); 2.800:1 (42/15) ratio

Gear	Internal gear ratio	Overall gear ratio	MPH per 1000 RPM
I	2.500	12.460	6.11
II	1.778	8.860	8.59
III	1.381	6.882	11.06
IV	1.125	5.607	13.57
V	0.962	4.792	15.88

SUSPENSION/WHEEL TRAVEL

Front . . . . . .Kayaba, 37mm stanchion tube diameter, 4-position adjustable compression damping, 4-position adjustable spring preload/6.1 in. (155mm)
Rear . . . . . single Kayaba shock, 4-position adjustable rebound damping, 11mm spring-preload range/5.0 in. (127mm)

BRAKES

Front . . . . . dual double-action hydraulic calipers, 10.7-in. (272mm) effective disc diameter
Rear . . . . . .double-action hydraulic caliper, 10.5-in. (267mm) effective disc diameter

TIRES

Front . . . . . .110/90V16-V240 Bridgestone Mag Mopus G515 tubeless
Rear . . . . . .130/90V17-V240 Bridgestone Mag Mopus G516 tubeless

DIMENSIONS AND CAPACITIES

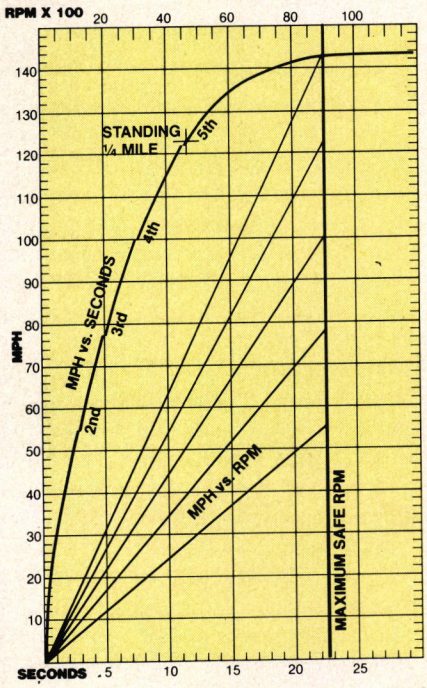
Weight . . . . . .542 lbs. (245.9kg)
Weight distribution . . . . . 50.0% front, 50.0% rear
Gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR) . . . . . 1030 lbs. (467kg)
Load capacity (with full fuel tank) . . . . . 454 lbs. (206kg)
Wheelbase . . . . . 59.5 to 60.8 in. (1511 to 1544mm)
Seat height . . . . . .31.3 in. (794mm)
Handlebar width . . . . . .24.7 in. (628mm)
Footpeg height . . . . . .13.8 in. (351mm)
Ground clearance . . . . . 6.4 in. (162mm), at centerstand
Steering head angle . . . . . 28.0 degrees from vertical
Front wheel trail . . . . . .4.61 in. (117mm)
Frame . . . . . .round- and box-section tubular mild steel, double front downtubes
Oil capacity . . . . . 3.4 qt. (3.2*l*)
Fuel tank . . . . . steel, 5.4 gal. (20.5*l*), including 1.2 gal. (4.5*l*) reserve
Instrumentation . . . . . speedometer, odometer, tripmeter resettable to zero, tachometer, fuel gauge, LCD digital gear indicator, oil-temperature gauge

PERFORMANCE

Fuel consumption range . . . . . .26 to 51 mpg (11 to 22 km/*l*)
Average fuel consumption . . . . . .36 mpg (15 km/*l*)
Cruising range, maximum . . . . . 140 to 275 miles (226 to 443km)
Cruising range, reserve only . . . . . 31 to 61 miles (50 to 98km)
Speedometer error, 30 mph indicated . . . . . 30 mph actual
Speedometer error, 55 mph indicated . . . . . 52 mph actual
Best 1/4-mile acceleration . . . . . 11.268 sec., 122.44 mph (197 km/h)
Top speed (observed) . . . . . 148 mph (238 km/h)
Stopping distance from 30 mph . . . . . 28 ft. (8.5m)
Stopping distance from 60 mph . . . . . 122 ft. (37.2m)

WARRANTY: 12 months, unlimited mileage

AVAILABLE COLORS: red-and-white; blue-and-white



All weight and measurements are taken with machine unladen and fuel tank empty.

PRODUCT EVALUATION:

All-American Sport Frames

The eyes have it.

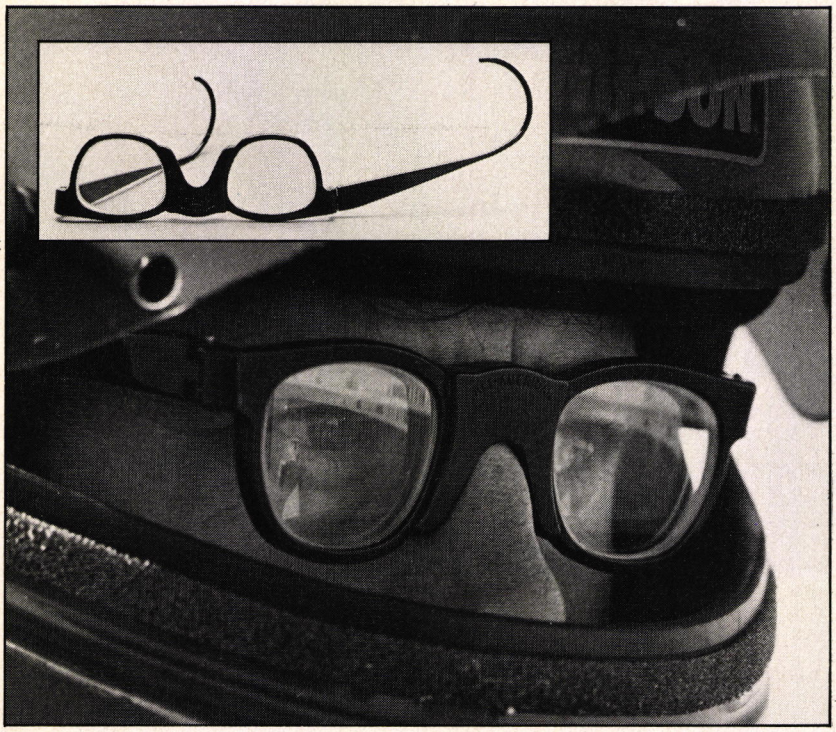
• Wearing eyeglasses under a motorcycle helmet can be a pain in the head. Simply put, most eyeglass frames don't fit particularly well inside a helmet, and a rider with poor eyesight (and who can't adjust to contact lenses) frequently has to sneak a finger or two inside his helmet to readjust his eyeglasses.

All-American Sport Frames can help alleviate that problem. They're made by Criss Optical Mfg. Co. Inc., P.O. Box 220, Augusta, Kansas 67010, and were designed primarily for sport use, such as for basketball players. But the All-American Sport Frames have features that make them a good choice for motorcyclists, too.

First off, the All-American frames are compact, and fit comfortably inside practically any full-coverage helmet. The temple pieces are made of Du Pont Zytel, a lightweight, flexible nylon, and have wraparound earpieces, too. Consequently, the All-American frames won't slip down the bridge of your nose. But perhaps what makes the Sport Frames practical for motorcyclists is the Kraton nosepiece. Kraton is a rubber-like material that's relatively soft and pliable, so if the frames *are* forced down onto the bridge of your nose, most of the pressure will be absorbed by the nosepiece—not by your nose. The trade-off for these features, though, comes in the styling: A rider wearing the Criss Sport Frames offers a good approximation of what Woody Allen might look like under a full-coverage helmet.

At least the Woody Allen look isn't too expensive. True, Criss Optical doesn't offer a suggested retail price for the frames, and instead, leaves that up to the optometrist you order them from. Our frames cost $38.95, not including the cost for corrective lenses—comparable in price to some designer-style frames. Black is the standard color, but other colors can be obtained, according to Criss Optical.

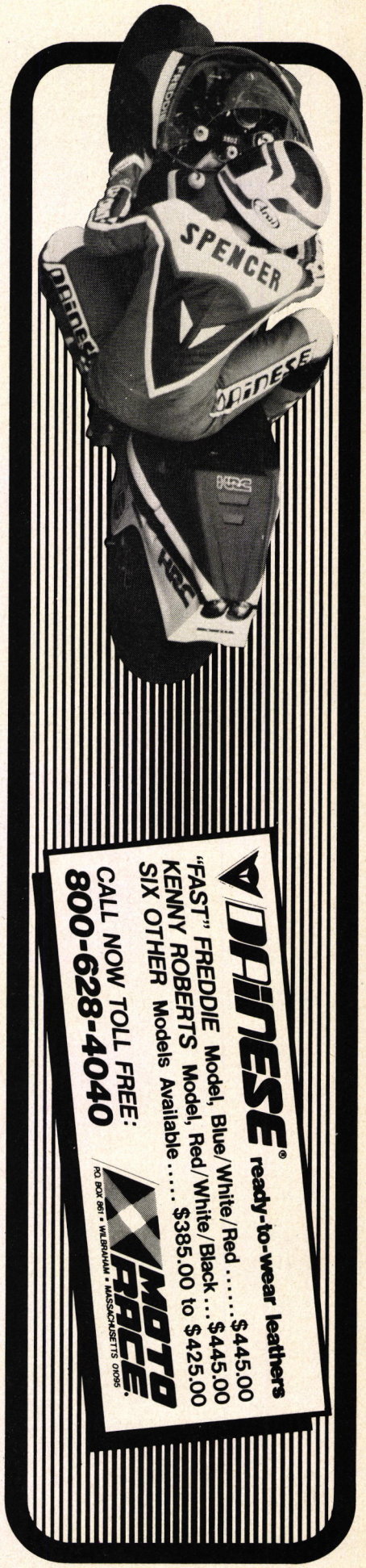
No matter what the color, though, the Sport Frames offer motorcyclists a functional alternative to conventional glasses, and are a workable solution to the problem of wearing eyeglasses inside a helmet. For the rider who is unable to wear contact lenses, Criss Sport Frames are perhaps the next best thing to having 20/20 vision. —*Dain Gingerelli*



© 1984 DAVID DEWHURST

The All-American Sport Frames fit inside practically any full-coverage helmet

Ready for racing or street riding, thanks to a compact, lightweight design.



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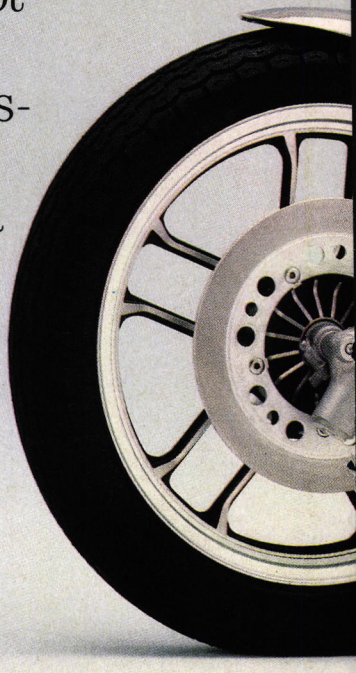
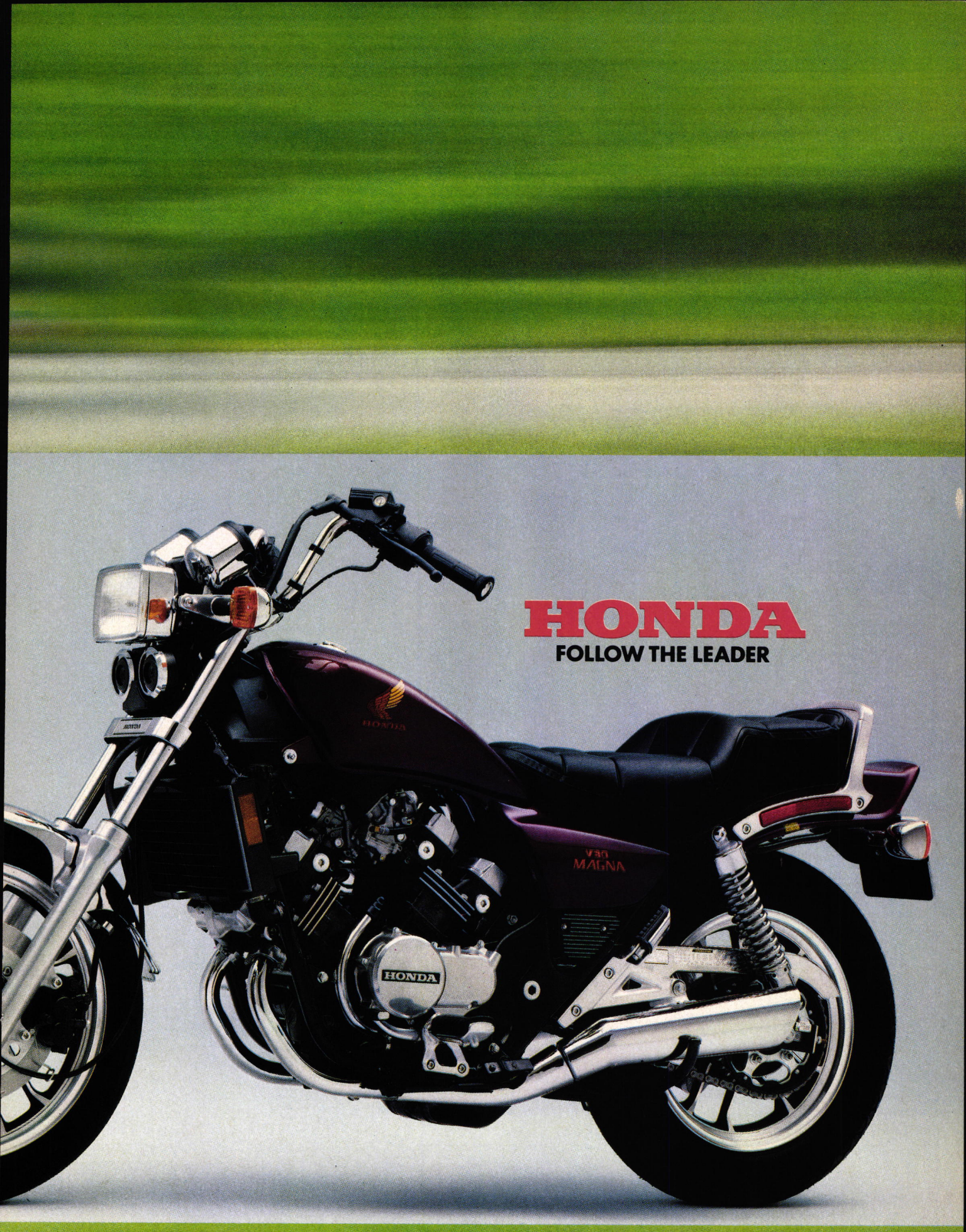
The V30 Magna. 500cc's never looked this mean.



ALWAYS WEAR A HELMET AND EYE PROTECTION.
The V30 Magna has a 12-month unlimited mileage warranty. See your local Honda dealer for complete details. Specifications and availability subject to change without notice. Rearview mirrors are standard equipment. †SAE net taken at the



crankshaft. California version differs slightly due to emissions equipment. ©1984 American Honda Motor Co., Inc. For a free brochure, see your Honda dealer. Or write: American Honda, Dept. 699-CG4, Box 9000, Van Nuys, CA 91409.

TRIALS TEST:

Can-Am 320T

A new student of the old school.

PHOTOGRAPHY © 1984 KIT PALMER

• It would be easy to claim the Can-Am 320T is the best trials bike you can buy in this country. But you also could claim the Can-Am is the *only* trials bike available in America—or at least, the only one readily available. Sure, the scattered remains of the Spanish-bike dealer networks still exist, and a sort of mail-order Italian import business can put trials hardware into your hands, but currently the Can-Am 320 is the only trials bike distributed through a substantial national dealer chain.

Can-Am entered the trials market after most other companies abandoned it. Last year, when Bombardier joined hands with Armstrong of England, the Can-Am 320T suddenly became the most available trials machine in America. Unlike other Can-Ams, which use Rotax powerplants, the 320 uses an Italian Hiro engine. The Hiro motor gets the job done in an unspectacular but efficient manner, though, with its six-speed transmission, a chrome bore and 27mm Amal carburetor.

In performance, too, Can-Am has taken a conservative approach. The 320T goes about the task of cleaning sections in a stable, purposeful manner reminiscent of a Bultaco. The Hiro motor, in fact, has even more flywheel effect than did the 350 Sherpa T, and as a result, the 320 is nearly impossible to stall without trying to do so. Overall, the 320 is in contrast to most modern trials bikes, which have less flywheel, smaller engines and require a more aggressive approach. The 320's power output isn't as impressive, though. A Montesa 349 has more power at virtually any rpm. But the Can-Am allows more room for rider error; the flywheel effect and soft power delivery excuse jerky throttle control, making the 320 excellent for beginners.

In handling, too, the Can-Am is a pupil of the old school of trials riding. The front end is relatively heavy, meaning the front wheel rarely washes out in turns. The Michelin tires help, as well, making traction easy to find on both hard and soft surfaces. The Can-Am isn't a dazzling stadium trials machine, because its tame power delivery and heavy front end make pulling the front wheel off the ground an energy-consuming task. It *is* possible to do all the flashy floating turns and tricks, but the Can-Am is at its best in straightforward, wheels-down sections where the goal is just to stay on the pegs with or without any amount of style.

CAN-AM 320 TRIALS

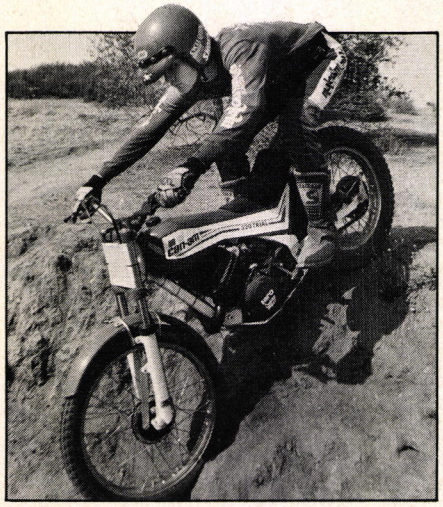
Importer: Bombardier Corporation
P.O. Box 6106
Duluth, Minnesota 55806

Category	trials
Suggested retail price	$2459
Engine type	two-stroke vertical single
Port arrangement	one piston-controlled intake, four transfers, one main exhaust, one booster exhaust
Bore and stroke	80.0mm x 64.0mm
Displacement	321.7cc
Compression ratio (corrected)	6.0:1
Carburetion	one 27mm Amal slide-needle
Gearbox	6-speed
Front fork/wheel travel	Marzocchi, 35mm stanchion tube diameter/4.8 in.(123mm)
Rear shocks/wheel travel	dual Marzocchi shocks, 5-position adjustable spring preload/4.5 in.(114mm)
Wheelbase	51.3 to 52.0 in. (1302 to 1320mm)
Seat height	29.0 in. (737mm)
Weight	205 lbs. (93.0kg)
Steering head angle	25.5 degrees from vertical
Front wheel trail	3.00 in. (76mm)
Warranty	none
Available color	red only

That kind of workhorse trials riding is the Can-Am's strongest point.

Its weakest point is a lack of attention to detail, and the 320T is plagued by a series of oversights. For example, the steering stops have plastic caps that limit the degree to which the front fork can be turned. And with the caps removed, the triple clamp cuts into the rubber strap that holds on the fuel tank. That fuel tank, incidentally, is made of fiberglass, and leaked from the first day of the test. Another annoying detail is evident when starting the bike: The kickstart lever hits the right footpeg halfway through the stroke. And the Can-Am brakes perform poorly when wet.

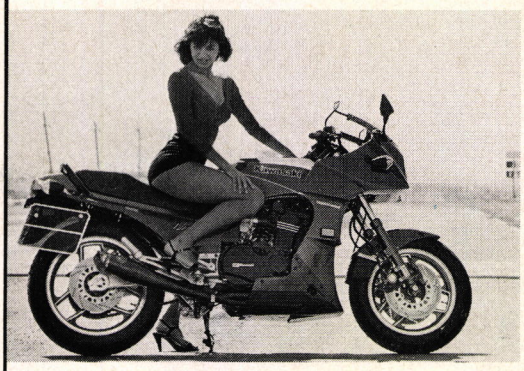
Many of those detail problems simply fade into insignificance in view of the Can-Am's position in the American trials market. But it would be unfair to say that the bike exceeds the standards set by its competition because the Can-Am really *has* no competition. And, details aside, the 320T is smooth, predictable and free of virtually any handling flaws—which ought to be enough to make the Can-Am stand out by *any* standards. —*Ron Lawson*



Hiro engine is hard to stall

But low power makes it no hero.

Ninja COBRA EXHAUST



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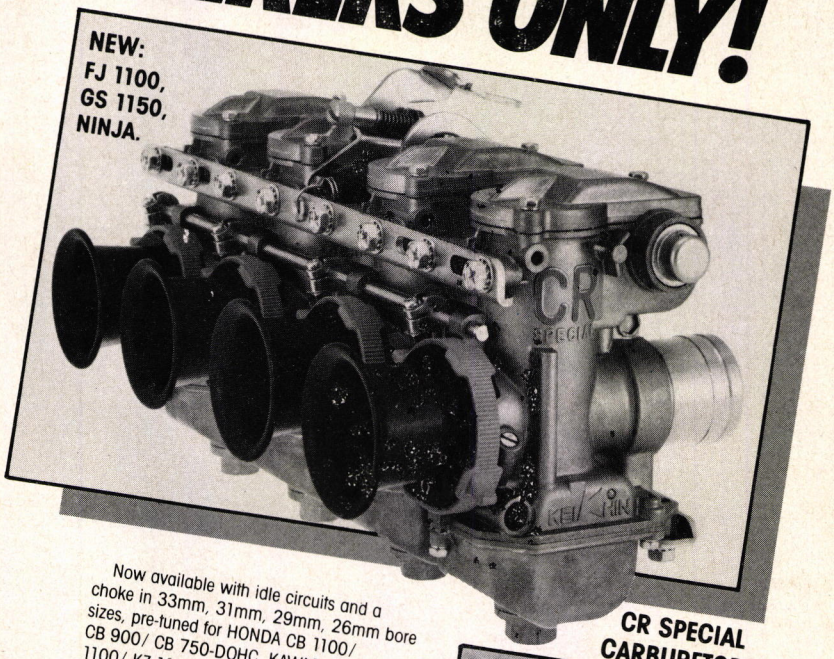

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ROAD TEST:

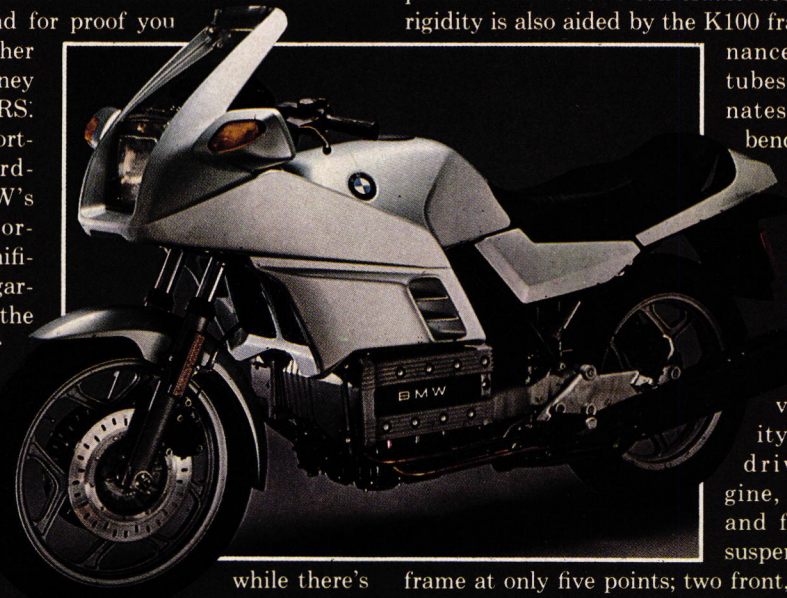
BMW K100RS

From the people who brought you the other world championship.

BY JIM MILLER

For years, BMW's motorcycles have gotten the short end of the technological stick. All of the firm's development efforts seemed to exist behind the traditional dual-kidney grille of BMW's four-wheelers, some of the world's most refined and sophisticated automobiles. Moreover, BMW engines dominated Formula 2 auto racing for years, and in 1983 a turbocharged BMW Four powered auto-racing's Formula 1 World Champion. Yet despite those achievements, the company's motorcycles have been as technically interesting as a double-bitted ax. It seemed that communication between BMW's automotive and motorcycling divisions consisted of little more than an exchange of pleasantries between engineers on their way to the restroom.

But now it's apparent that the lines of communication *are* open, and for proof you need look no further than the dual-kidney grille on the K100RS. The RS is the sport-touring standard-bearer of BMW's K100-series motorcycles, a bike significant enough to garner our "Bike of the Year" honors for 1984. And the centerpiece of the K100RS is its 987cc, dual-overhead-cam, liquid-cooled inline-four. Yet, while there's nothing remarkable about those specifications alone, the engine's horizontal, longitudinal layout *is* remarkable, and it offers a number of advantages over both traditional vertical transverse-fours and the company's own Boxer twins (See, "The Inline-Four, the German Approach," page 50).



One advantage the Boxer twin does have, however, is its light weight, an attribute BMW was loath to lose with the K00. So BMW went to great lengths to keep the K-bike as light as possible. Consequently, this latest bahnstormer includes such weight-saving tricks as hollow camshafts and axle spindles, BMW's unique, single-sided Monolever swingarm, and widespread use of aluminum alloy. For example, the swingarm, transmission shift drum, footpeg carriers and fuel tank are all made of aluminum. Nonetheless, at 532 pounds, the K100RS is nearly 40 pounds heavier than the R100RS.

But if you're looking for the source of that extra 40 pounds, you won't find it in the frame. By using the engine as a stressed member, BMW managed to keep the tubular-steel frame's weight down to a svelte 25 pounds. Using the engine as a load-bearing chassis member offers other advantages as well, not the least of which is superior chassis rigidity compared to the R100's full-cradle design. Structural rigidity is also aided by the K100 frame's predominance of straight tubes, which eliminates many of the bending loads commonly associated with frame flex. In addition to its strength, the K100's frame provides excellent service accessibility; the entire drivetrain—engine, transmission and final drive—is suspended from the frame at only five points; two front, three rear. Although those mounts are solid on the base-model K100, on the RS (and the RT) the front mounts are rubber-damped. And, unlikely as it might sound, BMW claims the stability offered by the fairings on those two models allowed designers to give up some of the torsional rigidity of the solid mounts.

Unfortunately, those rubber mounts are only partly successful at quelling the K100RS's engine vibration. Although the vibration is most apparent through the thick, square-edge grips, it also buzzes

PHOTOGRAPHY © 1984 MUSH EMMONS

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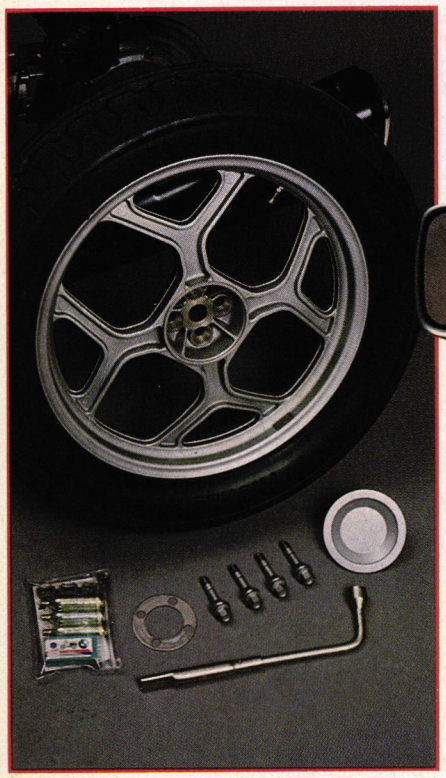


Rear wheel is a snap to remove

Just a hubcap and four bolts.

The K100RS's instrument panel includes warning lights for choke and fuel level

The high and low points of an otherwise businesslike cockpit.

the seat at certain rpm, and creeps through the thickly padded footpegs, too. The vibration never reaches numbing proportions, but it is ever-present, and disappointing on a long-distance mount like the RS.

The engine's powerband, however, is far from disappointing. BMW claims the K100 produces nearly 64 foot-pounds of torque, and that 85 percent of that maximum is available from 3000 rpm to the 8700-rpm redline. The engine's mile-wide powerband shows that those aren't just hollow claims, either. The RS accelerates from 15 mph to its 133 mph top speed without shudder or hesitation in fifth gear, and above 3000 rpm the engine responds with rheostat-like directness to a twist of the grip. The Bosch LE Jetronic fuel injection contributes to the engine's wide-band nature, by providing spot-on fuel delivery and quick throttle response, with no flat spots or surges anywhere in the powerband.

Bosch isn't the only automotive supplier BMW turned to in building the K100. The five-speed transmission was designed and built in conjunction with Getrag, a long-term automotive supplier for BMW. And as it was with the fuel-injection, the choice was a wise one. The K-bike shifts with a precision that R100 owners can only imagine, while retaining the R100's one-finger clutch action. Lever throw is still fairly long, but the disconnected feel and false neutrals of the Boxer's gearbox are as much a memory as BMW's Earles forks. Gear changes point up one R100 trait that is still with us, though; chassis-jacking accompanies each shift, and is as hard to ignore as a kick in the pants. Dialing up the rear spring-preload to the highest (of three) settings reduces the jacking to a degree, but the bike still rises noticeably on its suspension when you roll the power on.

Changing the rear spring's preload setting also runs the gamut of simple suspension adjustment on the K100. The K-bike sports no adjustable rebound or compression damping, no provision for air-assist, and no anti-dive system. BMW believes that carefully selected spring and damping rates should handle any style of riding the owner might choose. That attitude is certainly out-of-step with current Japanese thinking, and one with which many riders won't agree.

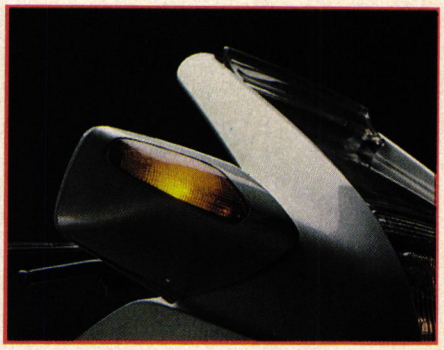
It's hard to fault the suspension settings that BMW did choose, though, particularly when you consider the RS's sport-touring intent. The fork feels somewhat soft in comparison to the rear shock, but the overall spring and damping rates are considerably stiffer than those on the R100. The K100RS delivers a firm, compliant ride, and only medium-size, sharp-edge bumps get through to jolt the rider, particularly with the rear spring cranked up to full-hard. In addition to raising the spring and damping rates, BMW also beefed up the fork for the K100; a pair of huge, 41.4mm-diameter stanchion tubes (the R100 uses 36mm tubes) pivot in tapered roller bearings. Capping that fork is a cast-aluminum triple clamp, which might not seem particularly novel, but for years BMWs have been equipped with a steel-plate upper triple clamp. And the flex the steel clamp allowed placed it at the top of the replacement list for sport riders. The change is welcome and long overdue; the K100RS shows no trace of fork or chassis flex, even during hard braking.

And make no mistake, the 280mm discs on the RS can stop the bike in a big hurry. The front Brembo calipers are particularly powerful, and easy to modulate. Initially, a two-finger squeeze slows the bike quickly, but obtaining that last erg of brake force requires whole-hand effort. Modulating the rear brake, however, is not so simple. The rear disc simply lacks sufficient feel and gets grabby when hot, which makes it difficult to gauge the lockup point. The rear brake is no problem in everyday use, but can become one in hard sport riding.

Stuffing the RS into corners also illustrates the difference between sport riding and sport-touring, at least as it's defined by BMW. Certainly, you can tilt the horizon to acute angles aboard the RS, without a trace of wobble, and the Michelin

The K100's handling favors the gentle hand and the graceful arc

No quick moves or snap judgments here.



Turnsignals form part of the fairing

And mirrors are part of the signals.

Handlebar switches are clearly marked

But it's thumbs up for the horn.

tires accommodate footpeg-dragging lean angles without slipping. You can cut a fast line through a corner, too, as long as that line is well chosen. But the bike's relatively slow steering means quick mid-corner line changes aren't in the RS's repertoire, which inhibits serious sport riding. You won't find mid-corner braking in the RS's area of expertise, either; the bike resists simultaneous leaning and braking efforts. The fast way through corners on the K100RS is to get all the particulars, such as line selection, shifting and braking out of the way first, then pitch the bike in and use the engine's incredibly broad powerband to reel in the next apex with your throttle hand. The RS can get you from point A to point B quickly, as long as you play by its rules.

And if those two points happen to be several hundred miles apart, all the better. The K100RS's forte is long-distance, high-speed running, and under those circumstances it really shines. At triple-digit speeds, the bike feels solid and exceptionally surefooted, even in the rain. Plus, the RS's wind-tunnel-designed fairing protects the rider from the elements, and its effectiveness improves with speed. Also, an adjustable airfoil, or jet, at the top of the windshield directs air over the rider's head to eliminate the buffeting and wind noise that can become annoying at speed. There's precious little else that will intrude on rider comfort at speed, either. The seat is a perfect compromise between board-hard and squishy-soft, its shape doesn't chafe the rider's thighs, the handlebar's bend places the rider in a relaxed crouch, and the footpegs allow for a comfortable bend at the knee. All-in-all, the K100RS is an outstanding mount for long-distance, high-speed comfort.

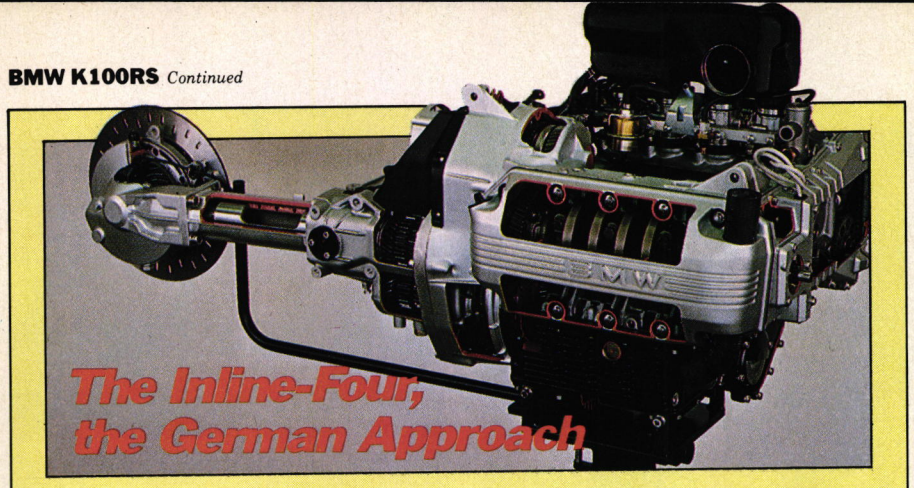
Slow down a bit, though, and things aren't quite so rosy. True, at legal speeds, the riding position retains its appeal, and the bike works well enough to serve as a passable commuter, apart from a slightly tall seat height. The problem is engine heat. BMW took a number of steps to isolate the rider from the heat, including a thermal "blanket" under the gas tank, and thick rubber inserts between the tank and fairing edges. But the RS still radiates enough heat—particularly from the tank—to make hot-weather riding uncomfortable. In cooler weather, the heat is less of a problem, but it's an area that needs improvement on the K100RS.

And it's the need for improvement and refinement that diminishes the K100RS's otherwise stellar character. In

Continued

COMPARATIVE TEST DATA:

Make and Model	Quarter-Mile, sec/mph	Top Speed, mph	Weight, lbs.	Stopping Distance From 60 mph, ft.
BMW K100RS-'84	12.381/109.48	133	532	139
BMW R100RS-'84	13.425/95.84	111	506	163
Laverda RGS1000-'84	12.565/106.50	130	556	140
Harley-Davidson FXRT-'85	14.180/90.36	92	640	126
Yamaha Venture Royale-'84	12.759/101.46	124	752	137
Yamaha FJ1100-'84	10.992/124.48	146	535	121



The Inline-Four, the German Approach

• From the start, the K100 engine was designed to offer a distinctive appearance, something people have come to expect from BMW. But this particular horizontal, longitudinal inline-four offers practical advantages, as well, such as a low center of gravity, a direct power transfer to the rear wheel and excellent serviceability. In fact, BMW claims that most major service—including rod-bearing and piston replacement—can be done with the engine still in the frame. There were, however, difficulties in designing the engine, such as keeping both weight and length to a minimum.

BMW helped minimize engine length by endowing the K100 with a relatively small bore, which contributes to the engine's slightly undersquare 67mm x 70mm bore and stroke. The engine also was kept short by not hanging the oil and water pumps off the crankshaft ends. Instead, a long gear-driven contrarotating layshaft under the crank drives those components, and transfers power to the clutch through a rubber damper, too. This layshaft assembly—and the gear-driven alternator mounted above the transmission—also were designed to offset the torque reaction created by the K100's longitudinally mounted crank. BMW's space-saving design kept overall engine length—less transmission—to just 20.3 inches.

Minimizing engine weight required a variety of solutions, as well. Like the Boxers, the K100 uses alloy-coated cylinder bores, eliminating the need for heavy cast-iron liners, and the cylinder block itself is a magnesium/aluminum/silicon alloy. Likewise, the 34mm throttle bodies for the Bosch fuel-injection were designed to be as light as possible. BMW claims the elaborate system provides excellent power and fuel economy, yet weighs no more than a comparable set of carburetors. The K100's use of an eight-valve head also was a weight consideration, made after BMW discovered it could reach its 90-horsepower goal for the new engine without the weight and complication of 16 valves. The lack of four valves per cylinder doesn't indicate an obsolete design though, because the K100 otherwise reflects current thinking, with a narrow 38-degree included valve angle, a relatively flat combustion chamber and a 10.2:1 compression ratio.

Those specifications might seem mundane, considering the unique look of the engine, but keep in mind that the K100 Four *is* rather conventional. It just doesn't look that way—by design.

—Jim Miller

some ways, such as high-speed comfort and power delivery, the K-bike is outstanding, and easily exceeds the standards set by the old R100RS. But by modern standards, the K100's favorable impressions are tarnished by some surprisingly rough edges, such as vibration control and engine heat. Obviously, BMW's car and motorcycle engineers need to get together a little more often: The K100 comes close to the level of *sophistication* of the firm's automobiles; now it's up to them to bring the bikes up to the same level of *refinement*. •

Nits:

- Exhaust heat shield buzzes.
- Two-light fuel indicator is inaccurate, and lights produce excessive nighttime glare.
- Fuel pump buzzes.
- Horn button is awkwardly placed.
- Front brake squeals.
- Fork lock's placement makes it difficult to use.

Picks:

- Toolkit is excellent, and includes a tire-repair kit.
- Rear wheel is simple to remove.
- Turnsignals are self-cancelling.
- Fuel-filler opening is large.
- Flip-up seat has two storage compartments underneath.
- Horns are exceptionally loud.
- Flip-out grab handle makes lifting bike onto centerstand easy.
- Exhaust system is stainless steel.
- Choke-on light is a convenient reminder.

Ride Review

• I really *want* to like the K100RS. I like the way it looks, the engineering philosophy that led to its design; I even liked the one I rode in Europe last year. So I was all set to have a great time riding the new Beemer on my own turf.

But the time I spent on the American K100RS was miserable. The instruments didn't work, the fork felt soggy during braking, and the swingarm jacked up and down much more than I remembered from Europe. At cruising speed, the bike vibrated far more than a BMW Boxer. The engine ran balkily at low rpm, and a ticking valve resonated throughout the motorcycle like a tin cup amplified through a Folsom water pipe. To add injury to insult, the gas tank seared my thighs. Mercifully, my ride was cut short when the driveshaft DNFed. I'm sorry, BMW. I'm really sorry. *—Paul Van Zuyle*

• Beemerphiles can start thinking about trading in the old Boxer; the inline four-banger is everything they hoped it would be. It isn't a copy of Japanese inline-fours; the only similarities are theoretical ones. Nope, this powerplant is pure Formula 1 in its total kinesthetics: power delivery, sound, torque, physical appearance—and vibration.

The motorcycle as a whole isn't perfect, but once again, BMW devotees will be pleased. The engine is the focus, and it has one *hell* of a commanding presence. BMW marque-freaks should feel right at home, because all the familiar quirks that made the Boxers what they are still exist in the new Four. That means if you wear BMW-emblazoned underwear, it's time you started thinking about retiring the old Boxer from the ring. *—David Mallet*

• I demand one thing from motorcycles: excitement, either intellectual or emotional. And that's where the K100RS and I part company, because it leaves me cold. I know the motor has roots in a championship-winning F1 car, but it's still just an inline-four with two valves per cylinder; old news, in other words. Even that would be all right if riding the bike excited me, but it doesn't. I admire the engine's flexibility, but it vibrates annoyingly, strong-running 750s can kick sand in its face, and the bike never lets you forget it has shaft drive. And the glitches don't stop there, either.

Some riders might argue that those traits are part of the BMW's personality, but I disagree. In this case, personality is just a smoke screen for quirkiness, and, for me, anyway, that's no substitute for excitement. *—Charles Everitt*

CYCLE GUIDE SPECIFICATIONS

BMW K100RS — sport-touring

IMPORTER: BMW of North America Inc., BMW Plaza, Montvale, New Jersey 07645

SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE: $7200

ENGINE

Type . . . . liquid-cooled four-stroke longitudinal horizontal four
Valve arrangement . . . . . double overhead camshafts, two valves per cylinder
Bore and stroke . . . . . 67.0mm x 70.0mm
Displacement 987.2cc
Compression ratio 10.2:1
Engine redline . . . . . 8500 rpm
Carburetion . . . . . Bosch LE-Jetronic fuel injection, four 34mm throttle bodies
Air filter . . . . . disposable paper element
Lubrication . . . . . wet sump
Starting system . . . . . electric only
Ignition . . . . . transistorized breakerless
Charging system . . . . . 12-volt; 460-watt alternator, voltage regulator/rectifier, 30-ampere-hour battery

DRIVETRAIN

Primary drive . . . . . helical gears; 1.000:1 ratio
Clutch . . . . . dry, single-plate
Driveshaft-to-rear-wheel drive . . . . . spiral-bevel gears; 2.818:1 ratio

Gear	Internal gear ratio	Overall gear ratio	MPH per 1000 RPM
I	4.497	12.673	5.95
II	2.959	8.338	9.04
III	2.304	6.493	11.61
IV	1.879	5.295	14.23
V	1.666	4.695	16.05

SUSPENSION/WHEEL TRAVEL

Front . . . . . BMW, 41.4mm stanchion tube diameter, /6.9 in. (174mm)
Rear . . . . . single Boge shock, 3-position adjustable spring preload /4.2 in. (107mm)

BRAKES

Front . . . . . dual double-action hydraulic calipers, 11.0-in. (279mm) effective disc diameter
Rear . . . . . double-action hydraulic caliper, 11.0-in. (280mm) effective disc diameter

TIRES

Front . . . . . 100/90V18 Michelin A48 tubeless
Rear . . . . . 130/90V17 Michelin M48 tubeless

DIMENSIONS AND CAPACITIES

Weight . . . . . 532 lbs. (241.3kg)
Weight distribution . . . . . 47.4% front, 52.6% rear
Gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR) . . . . . 992 lbs. (450kg)
Load capacity (with full fuel tank) . . . . . 426 lbs. (193kg)
Wheelbase . . . . . 59.7 in. (1516mm)
Seat height . . . . . 33.0 in. (838mm)
Handlebar width . . . . . 23.2 in. (590mm)
Footpeg height . . . . . 13.5 in. (343mm)
Ground clearance . . . . . 6.9 in. (176mm), at engine sump
Steering head angle . . . . . 27.5 degrees from vertical
Front wheel trail . . . . . 3.98 in. (101mm)
Frame . . . . . tubular mild steel, no front downtubes
Oil capacity . . . . . 3.8 qt. (4.0/)
Fuel tank . . . . . steel, 5.5 gal. (21.0/), no reserve
Instrumentation . . . . . speedometer, odometer, tripmeter resettable to zero, tachometer, LCD digital gear position indicator, LCD digital clock

PERFORMANCE

Fuel consumption range . . . . . 39 to 54 mpg (17 to 23 km/l)
Average fuel consumption . . . . . 47 mpg (20 km/l)
Cruising range, maximum . . . . . 216 to 298 miles (348 to 479km)
Speedometer error, 30 mph indicated . . . . . 28 mph actual
Speedometer error, 55 mph indicated . . . . . 52 mph actual
Best 1/4-mile acceleration . . . . . 12.381 sec., 109.48 mph (176 km/h)
Top speed (observed) . . . . . 133 mph (214 km/h)
Stopping distance from 30 mph . . . . . 35 ft. (10.7m)
Stopping distance from 60 mph . . . . . 139 ft. (42.4m)

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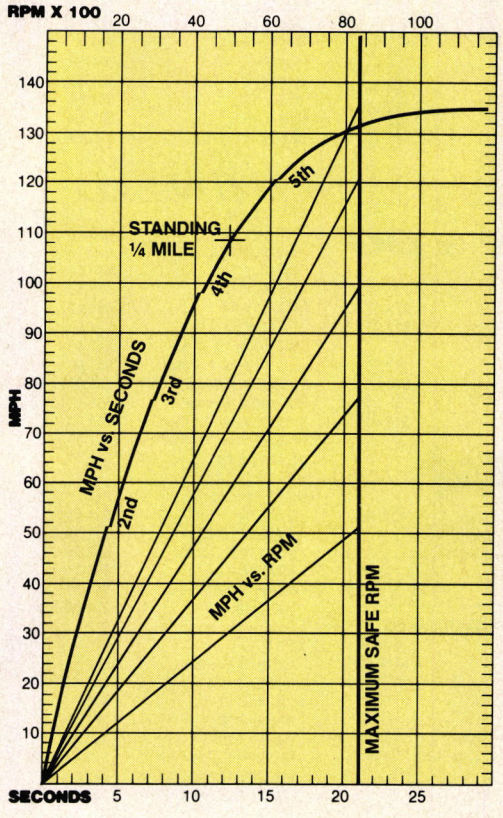

All weight and measurements are taken with machine unladen and fuel tank empty.

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RIDING IMPRESSION:

BMW K100RT

Just right for a week in the passes.

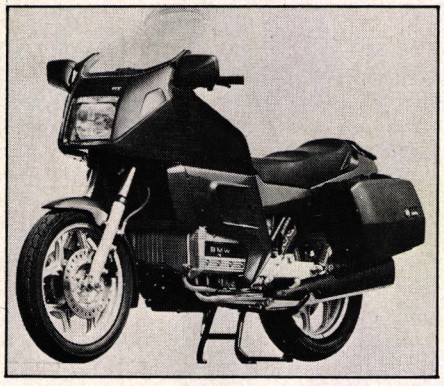
• Although most of the hoopla surrounding BMW's new K-series motorcycles naturally has centered upon the exotic-looking RS sport-tourer, American riders might find the most important K-bike to be the RT version. The K-RT is basically a K100RS in American-style touring mufti, with a different fairing, an optional Nivomat automatically adjusted, self-leveling rear suspension unit, a 1-percent greater rearward-weight-bias, and a slightly lower (higher numerical) final-drive ratio.

To examine the effects of those changes, we arranged a week-long ride of a K100RS and a K100RT on their home turf. We rode through the German, French, Swiss, Italian and Austrian Alps, and racked up 1700 miles to form some impressions of the RT's best and worst points.

One of the RT's best features is its fairing, the most noticeable change to the bike from RS-spec. Yet, while just a glance tells you how different the K-RT fairing is from the R100RT's, only riding shows the excellent wind and weather protection the K-bike's fairing provides. There's little turbulence or buffeting, due in part to the pressure-relief slots between the mirrors and fairing body, and the "jet" at the top of the windshield. The fairing even does a reasonable job of directing engine heat away from the rider, thanks to the side ducting and two vents under the headlight. But on a hot day in traffic, the slots and vents can't get rid of all the under-tank heat.

The RT's fairing has another effect on the K-bike as well, compared to the K-RS: increased aerodynamic drag, which dropped the RT's indicated top speed to 139 mph, whereas the RS along the same stretch was at an indicated 143 mph and still accelerating. Likewise, drag—and the RT's shorter gearing—contributed to the drop in fuel economy between the RS and RT; the RS recorded a 1700-mile average of 42 mpg, and the RT only 38.

More important to American riders than peak fuel economy, though, is the K-RT's superb low- and medium-speed behavior, which made it the preferred choice in the tight, bumpy Alpine switchbacks. Under those conditions, the RT's wide handlebar (0.4 inches wider than the standard K's, 5.8 wider than the RS's), self-adjusting Nivomat rear shock and Pirelli Phantom tires made the tourer feel light, stable and rock-steady—up to about 90 mph. Past that speed, the bike demonstrated a pronounced high-speed weave, partially because of the imprecision in steering input caused by its rubber-mounted handlebar. Yet, up to that point, the RT offers handling that combines the best of the sport and touring genres.

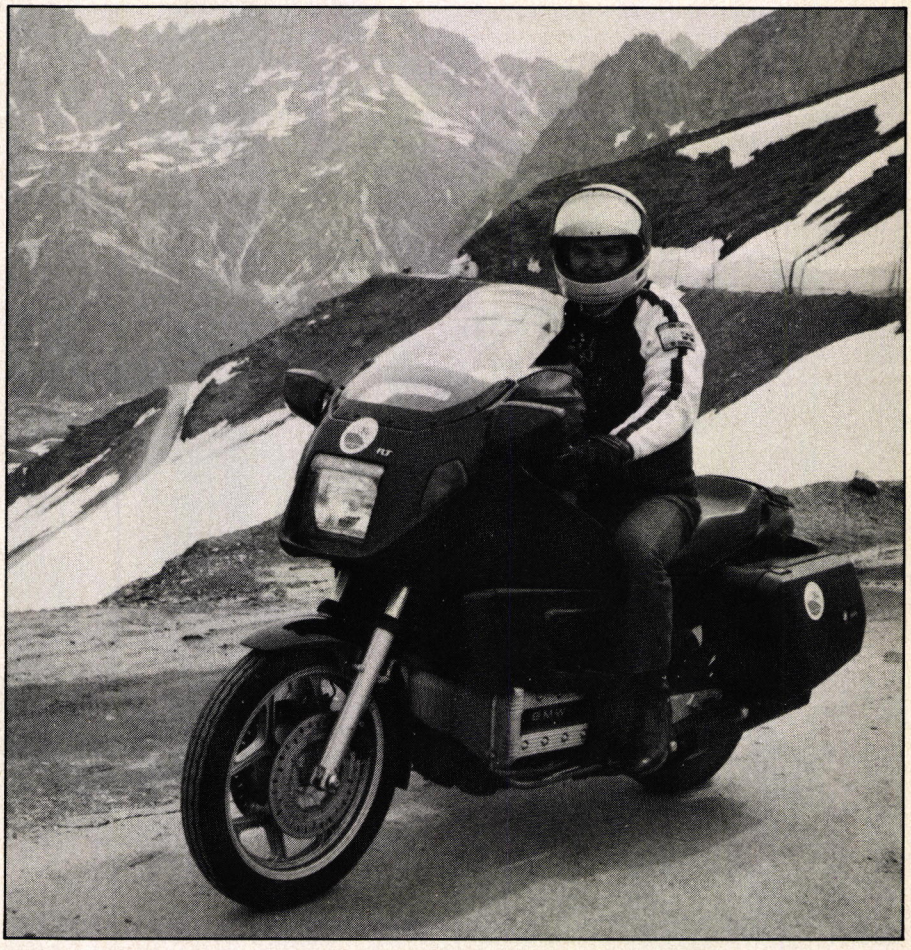


Also related to the RT's touring performance is its new integral luggage system, which, for the most part, is very good. The new saddlebags have a greater carrying capacity than the old-style bags (35 liters versus 33 liters), and attach via a simple clamp-over-rail system. However, while we liked the increased volume, we never really got the hang of the mounting procedure, and sometimes found it difficult to get a bag on or off because of the necessary close fit between clamp and rail.

Nor was the baggage-mounting our only problem with the K-RT. Our BMW also suffered a fuel-injection malady that stopped the bike dead six times while climbing an Italian alp; the malfunction was diagnosed as a too-rich setting for the fuel regulator. And the RT's gas cap wept fuel, soaking the top of the tank—and the underside of a tankbag.

Apart from those problems, though, the K100RT still emerged from our Alpine ride with all of its charm intact, thanks to its strong, tractable motor and satisfying handling. In short, BMW's K-RT offers a unique alternative to anyone looking for a ride slotted between the extremes of sport-touring and full-boat turn-key touring. In that zone, the RT provides, as an old campaign slogan promised, a choice, not an echo.

—Steve Thompson



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K-RT has a different fairing, weight distribution and final gearing from the K-RS's

It's still an Alpine star, even though it's configured for Yankee-style touring.

COMPARISON ROAD TEST:

BMW R100RS vs. K100RS

In search of the definitive sport-tourer.

• If you had consulted the Moto-Lexicon for the definition of "sport-touring" in recent years, the description would have included: long-haul comfort and the ability to handle extra-legal speeds. You would have read that the sport-tourer neatly splits the difference between the Double Nickel and WFO, mixing Interstate and backroad, while delivering its rider unruffled at day's end. And illustrating that definition would have been a photo of BMW's R100RS, the archetypal sport-tourer since its introduction in 1976.

The 1984 edition, if there were such a volume, would have provided a similar definition, but the artwork would have changed; instead, you'd find the R100RS' replacement, the four-cylinder K100RS. Although the K-bike and the R-type overlap for 1984, the coming of the K meant the end for the entire R100 series. To commemorate that passage, BMW built limited editions of the R100 series, with special features and custom paint. In the case of the R100RS, only 250 final-edition units were built, set off from standard models by saddlebags, custom paint and both solo and dual seats. And while some collectors undoubtedly are salting away these scarce Boxers for their investment potential, the bikes' real value lies in comparison, in finding out just how the end of the R100RS line compares to its *wunderbike* replacement.

Few BMW marque-fanciers will criticize the K-bike's engine performance. While the R100 has been renowned for a broad powerband befitting a big twin, the K-type's longitudinal inline-four makes the opposed-twin seem antiquated. The R-type offers strong throttle reponse from 2500 rpm to its 7300-rpm redline, but the K pulls hard anywhere from 1500 rpm to past its 8700-rpm redline, when fuel flow through the injector nozzles is shut off. As a result, the R-RS must be shifted far more often; and in shifting, another difference crops up: Both K- and R-types have long lever throws, but the K's shifting is precise and slick; the R's is notchy, and has more false starts in it than a first date.

A comparison of absolute performance seems equally lopsided. In roll-ons from 50 mph in top gear, the Four easily out-motors the Twin, and keeps pulling ahead. The K-bike's horsepower advantage showed up on the dragstrip, too, with the K-bike running though the lights at 12.381/109.48 to the Boxer's best run of 13.425/95.84. Top speed runs, as well, display the K's performance advantage: 133 mph to the Twin's 111.

Twisty-road comparisons only affirm technology's dominance over tradition. Not only will the K-bike out-motor the R, with better drive out of almost any corner, the K outhandles it, too. Despite the Twin's near-40-pound weight advantage, by comparison it feels sluggish in sharp corners, and also touches down undercarriage bits more easily than the K-bike. Further, the R is plagued by its thinnish fork tubes and stamped-steel upper triple clamp, which

show up in imprecise steering when the R is pushed hard.

Sport-touring isn't limited to backroad performance, though, and at Interstate speeds the R regains some of its lost ground. Chief among its relative advantages are a lack of vibration and engine heat. The R *does* vibrate, of course, but it's the soothing low-frequency, high-amplitude thump that has always marked Boxer Beemers. The R is smoothest between 55 mph-75 mph in top gear, which, after all, is where it likely will see much of its time on the road. At those same speeds—at most speeds, in fact—the K's ride is marred by a Mark-One inline-four tingle: It buzzes through the tank, pegs and handgrips, only starting to diminish when the electronic speedometer hits triple digits. And only at high speeds does the K's engine heat start to clear out; at lower speeds, the K's heat buildup sneaks past its under-tank thermal blanket, warming the rider's thighs uncomfortably.

High-speed runs further serve to demonstrate the advancement in technology between 1976, when the RS' fairing stirred up waves of attention by *not* stirring up waves of rider-buffeting wind, and 1984, the K-RS' debut. The R's large fairing, in conjunction with its low, stubby handlebar and tucked riding position, combine to give the rider excellent wind-protection. But everything the R-type's windbreaker does with layered fiberglass the K's does with better aerodynamics. From the saddle of the K-bike, the rider gets virtually the same level of wind-protection at speed, without being forced into a tight crouch behind the windscreen.

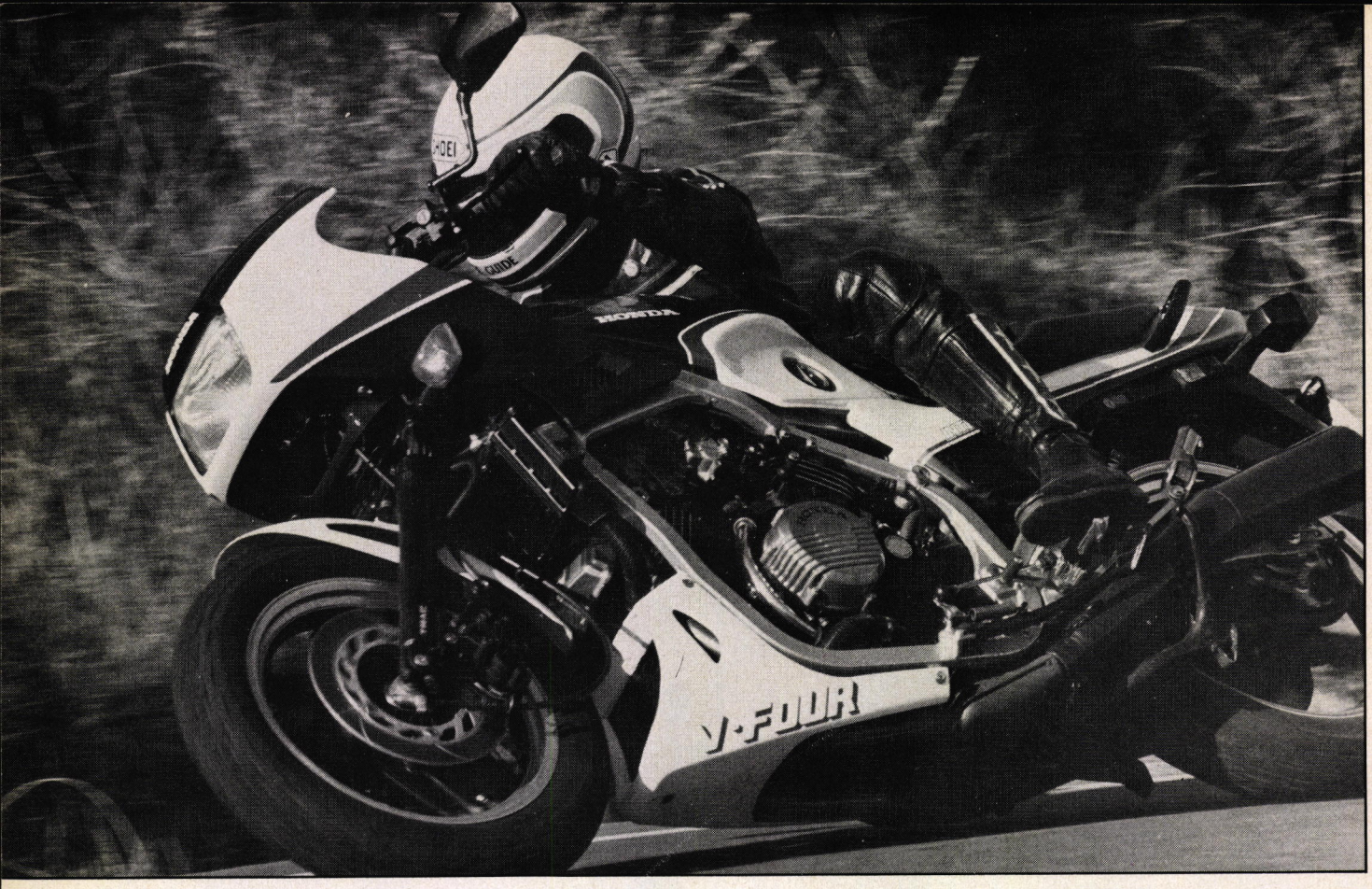
By most measures of performance, in fact, the K100RS is simply a better motorcycle. Whether it will, in time, attain the status of the bike it replaces remains to be seen. One thing is clear, however: With the K100RS' advantages in cornering, acceleration and top speed, it hasn't only replaced the R100RS as the illustration for "sport-touring"; it's rewriting the definition, too.

— Larry Works

BMW R100RS

Importer: BMW North America Inc.
BMW Plaza
Montvale, New Jersey 07645

Category	sport-touring
Suggested retail price	$6900
Engine type	four-stroke horizontally opposed twin
Valve arrangement	pushrod-operated overhead valves
Bore and stroke	94.0mm x 70.6mm
Displacement	979.9cc
Compression ratio	8.2:1
Carburetion	two 40mm Bing constant-vacuum
Gearbox	5-speed
Front fork/wheel travel	BMW, 36mm stanchion tube diameter/6.7 in.(169mm)
Rear shock/wheel travel	dual Boge shocks, 3-position adjustable spring preload/5.2 in. (131mm)
Wheelbase	58.8 in. (1477mm)
Weight	506 lbs. (229.5kg)
Seat height	32.1 in. (816mm)
Steering head angle	27.5 degrees from vertical
Front wheel trail	3.7 in. (95mm)
Best ¼-mile acceleration	13.425 sec., 95.84 mph (154 km/h)
Top Speed (observed)	111 mph (179 km/h)
Stopping distance from 60 mph	163ft. (49.7m)
Fuel consumption	45 to 57 mpg(19 to 24 km/l)
Warranty	3 years, unlimited mileage
Available color	white



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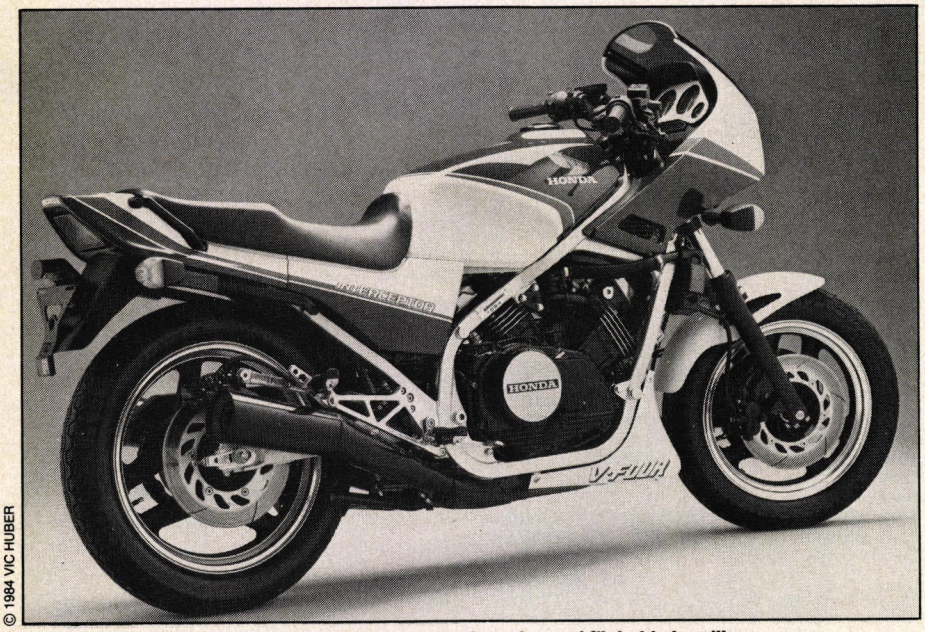
ROAD TEST:

Honda VF700F Interceptor

The difference is $798, 49cc—and five horsepower.



© 1984 VIC HUBER

The VF700F retains 750's roadracy styling, smooth engine and flickable handling

But short-stroke ITC engine is no power match for the Interceptor 750 vee-four.

• To say that the 1983 V45 Interceptor ignited the passions of sportriders borders on understatement. The bike's mile-wide powerband, precise handling, strong brakes, roadracy styling and suggested retail price of $3498 made the 750 Interceptor the object of universal desire. It soon sold out—particularly amazing in a year when drastically slashed prices were available on many large-bore motorcycles.

1984 brought with it a 750 Interceptor that was largely unchanged. But 1984 also brought the ITC tariff, and the 750 Interceptor's price jumped to a whopping $4396, putting it head-to-head with the ferocious new 908cc Kawasaki Ninja. To beat the tariff, and to have a price-competitive 750-class sportbike, Honda built an ITC special, the VF700F Interceptor. The 750's motor was destroked to 699cc and some minor engine work came with it, but the bike is essentially a 750 Interceptor; it still handles, stops and resembles the original—which naturally means the two will be compared.

To reduce the displacement from 748cc to 699cc, the 750's stroke was shortened from 48.6mm to 45.4mm, and the connecting rods were lengthened from 115.6mm to 117.2mm, producing a radically oversquare bore/stroke relationship of 70.0mm x 45.4mm. Slight reshaping of the piston domes accompanied the change, though the compression ratio remains at 10.5:1. Cam duration was decreased as well, a change claimed to improve midrange on the smaller engine. And to partially offset the 700's power deficit, one tooth was dropped from the 700's countershaft sprocket. As a result, the 700 spins about 300 rpm faster at 55

mph than the 750, but the engine is still loafing. The result of those changes is a motor Honda claims produces 81 horsepower—five less than the 750. The real question, of course, isn't one of specifications but how that horsepower difference affects the 700's performance.

On the street, that difference is noticeable throughout the rev range. Compared to the 750, the 700 feels shorter of breath, despite its cam-timing change. A greater difference exists in top speed: The 700 tops out at 124; the 750 at 140. And in top-gear roll-ons from 50 mph, the 750 handily pulls out in front. At the dragstrip, the 700 produced a best run of 12.323/106.50, much slower than the 750's 11.890/114.64 figures, and closer to the times of the 500 Interceptor's 12.484/106.00.

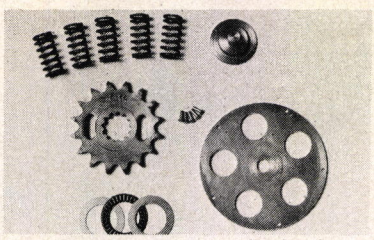
But horsepower output is only one measure of a sportbike's performance. If you're a street rider who's learned that finesse can be more important than sheer power, the 700 will not disappoint. The ITC Interceptor has all the characteristics that marked the '83 and '84 750s as astonishing canyon carvers: flick-it handling; controllable, predictable brakes; widely versatile suspension and power delivery smoother than a baby's bottom. In a twisty-road comparison between the 700 and the 750, the outcome will depend *far* more on rider skill than on horsepower.

So, even if the ITC tariff extracted a horsepower price from the 700, there's still another price to consider: The 700 is nearly $800 less expensive than the 750. And to judge the 700 Interceptor only by its lesser horsepower is to deny the qualities that made the Interceptor an overnight bestseller. —*David Mallet*

HONDA VF700F Interceptor

Importer: American Honda Motor Company Inc.
100 West Alondra Boulevard
Gardena, California 90247

Category	street
Suggested retail price	$3598
Engine type	liquid-cooled four-stroke 90-degree tandem vee-four
Valve arrangement	double overhead camshafts, four valves per cylinder
Bore and stroke	70.0mm x 45.4mm
Displacement	698.9cc
Compression ratio	10.5:1
Carburetion	four 30mm Keihin constant-vacuum
Gearbox	5-speed
Front fork/wheel travel	Showa air-spring, 39mm stanchion tube diameter, 3-position adjustable rebound damping, brake-actuated hydraulic anti-dive/ 6.1 in.(156mm)
Rear shock/wheel travel	single Showa air-spring shock, 4-position adjustable rebound damping /5.2 in.(131mm)
Wheelbase	59.8 to 61.2 in. (1518 to 1554mm)
Seat height	31.6 in. (803mm)
Weight	512 lbs. (232.2kg)
Steering head angle	28.5 degrees from vertical
Front wheel trail	3.78 in. (96mm)
Best ¼-mile acceleration	12.323 sec., 106.50 mph(171 km/h)
Top Speed (observed)	124 mph (200 km/h)
Stopping distance from 60 mph	136 ft.(41.5m)
Fuel consumption	37 to 48 mpg(16 to 20 km/l)
Warranty	12 months, unlimited mileage
Available colors	red-and-white; blue-and-white



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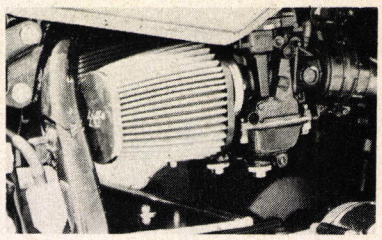

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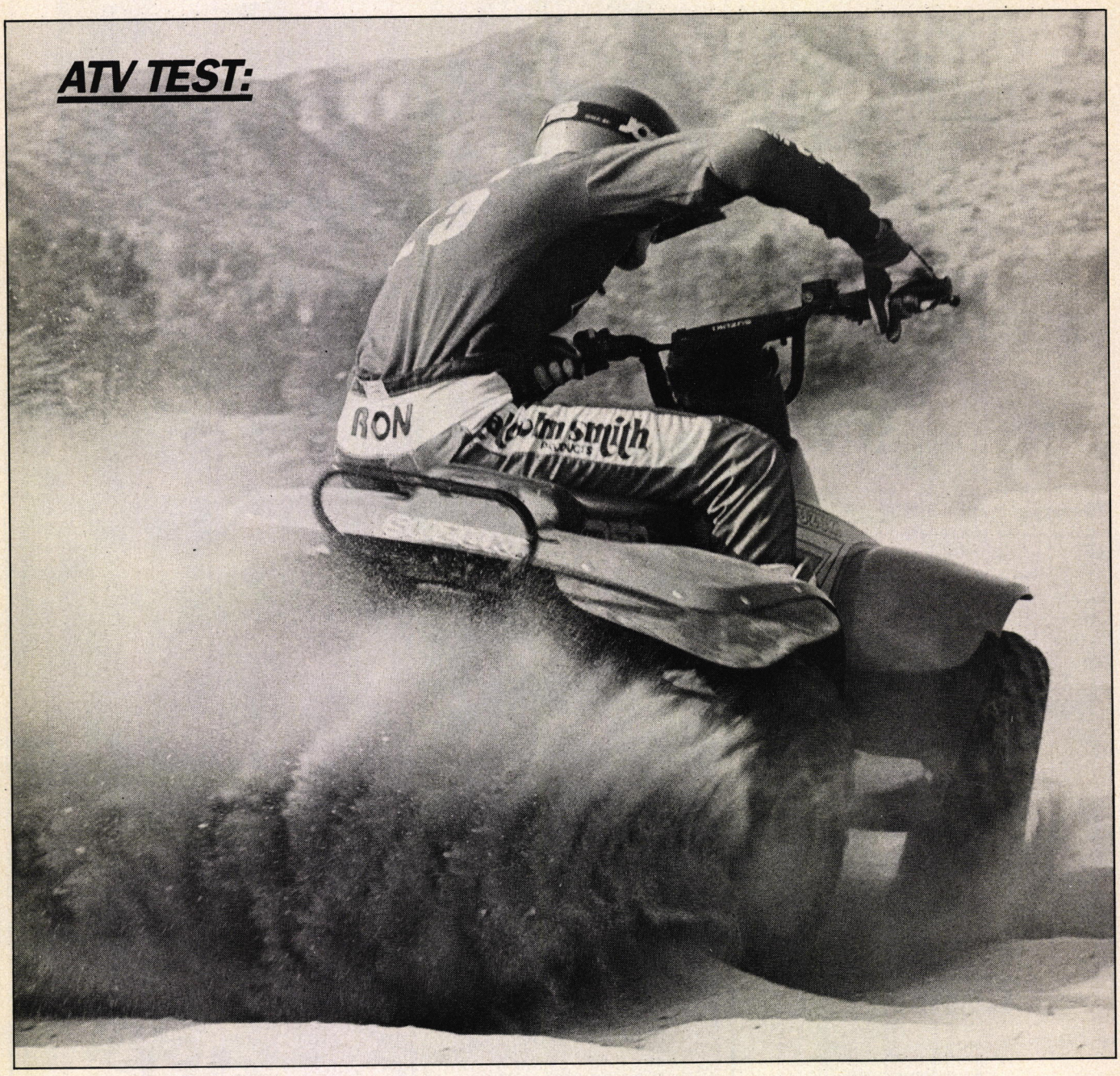

PHOTOGRAPHY © 1984 DAVID DEWHURST

Suzuki Quadrunner 250

Recreation goes incognito.

• Suzuki's Quadrunner isn't just a four-wheel all-terrain vehicle. It's an excuse on wheels—a rationalization to have fun under the pretense of being practical.

In the eyes of a wife, girlfriend or parent, the Quadrunner has the appearance of social responsibility: It has four wheels like a car, and electric start too—kind of a safe-and-sane dirt utility device. But in reality, the Quadrunner 250 is an all-out, sand-blasting, wheelying, anything-for-laughs machine with just one goal: fun.

The socially responsible side of the Quadrunner's personality is represented on the feature list. The machine has a counterbalanced 250cc four-valve, four-stroke motor similar to the powerplants used for Suzuki's DR and GN250 motorcycles. The bottom end has little in common with any two-wheelers, though, and has a centrifugal clutch and a transmission with five speeds plus reverse. The Quadrunner also has all the amenities to make it a practical buy as a utility vehicle: optional racks and trailer hitch, and the electric starter is even backed up with a pull-starter in case the battery goes dead. But even through the Quadrunner's well-tailored facade, you can see elements of its true purpose. The machine has front suspension, hydraulic front brakes and a racy demeanor that says it's serious about not being taken *too* seriously.

You get the true picture of the Quadrunner's purpose as soon as it hits the dirt. Don't expect the same anemic acceleration previous Suzuki four-wheelers offered; the 250 accelerates *hard*. It's not as fast as Honda's Odyssey or ATC250R, but the Suzuki is by far the fastest of the new four-wheelers, including Honda's new TRX200. The Suzuki also is considerably lighter than that utility-oriented Honda,

and wheelies are a simple matter of leaning back and pushing the Quadrunner's thumb-operated throttle.

Another reason wheelies are so easy is the Quadrunner's rearward weight bias. The front end is extremely light, which sometimes can make turning difficult. Contrary to what you might think, a four-wheeler turns no better than a three wheeler; they both require the same technique of moving your weight forward and hanging off the inside of the machine.

Suzuki's Quadrunner does have a few advantages over a three-wheeler, though. One is that it leaves only two parallel tracks, not three. That means it's easier to pick lines through rocky terrain because you don't hit every obstacle in your path. Another advantage that appeals to the utilitarian is that a four-wheeler can carry more—there's more room for racks on the front and on the back.

Many riders, of course, won't be adding any racks, or concerning themselves with carrying capacity. They'll leave the Suzuki in stripped form and just ride for the fun of it. But if you do that, never admit how much fun the Quadrunner really is. You'll ruin a great excuse for the rest of us.

—Ron Lawson

The 250 Quadrunner is a serious machine

Ready and willing for some serious fun.

SUZUKI LT QUADRUNNER 250 EF

Importer: U.S. Suzuki Motor Corp.
3251 East Imperial Highway
Brea, California 92621

Category	four-wheeled all-terrain vehicle
Suggested retail price	$1919
Engine type	four-stroke vertical single
Valve arrangement	single overhead camshaft, four valves per cylinder
Bore and stroke	72.0mm x 61.0mm
Displacement	249.2cc
Compression ratio	8.5:1
Carburetion	one 24mm Mikuni slide/needle
Starting system	electric; pull-cord
Gearbox	5-speed forward, one reverse
Front suspension/wheel travel	independent, dual shocks/1.0 in. (26mm)
Rear shock/wheel travel	none
Wheelbase	43.2 to 43.8 in. (1098 to 1114mm)
Weight	384 lbs. (174.2kg)
Track	25.8 in.(655mm) front; 30.3 in. (776mm) rear
Seat height	29.4 in. (746mm)
Warranty	3 months
Available Color	orange only

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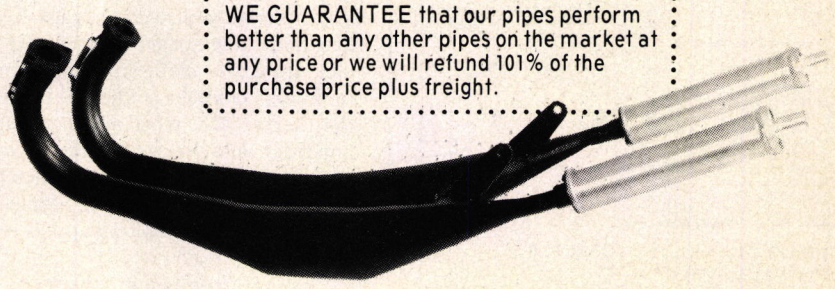

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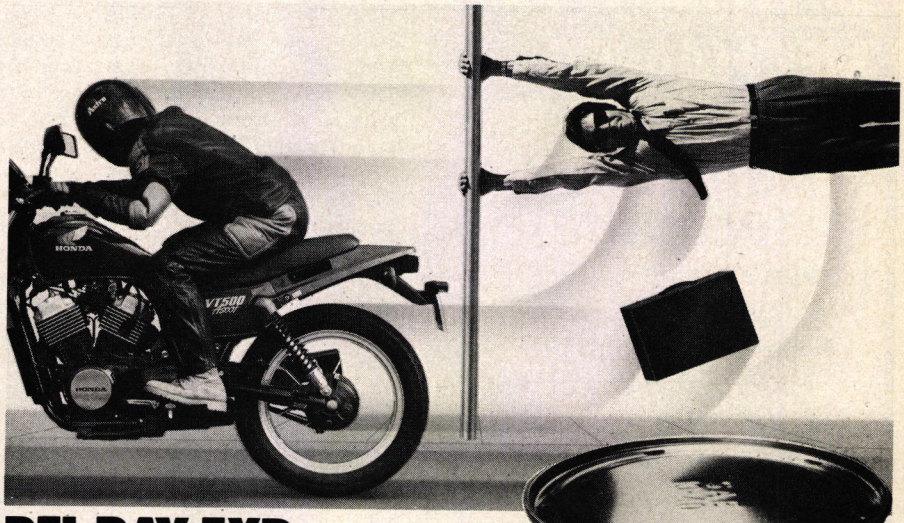

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PRODUCT EVALUATION:

Chase Harper Hide-Away Gear Bag

Have bungees, will bag it.

• For full-time touring riders, the choice is simple: If you need luggage for the long haul, all you have to do is take your pick from the mind-stunning array of tankbags, saddlebags and tail trunks on the market. But what about the short-hop rider, who doesn't need much carrying capacity, and who might not want the inconvenience of having luggage—or mounting harnesses—strapped to his bike all the time?

Chase Harper has an answer to that question in the form of its Hide-Away Gear Bag, a new piece of soft luggage with both built-in bungee cords and an added twist of convenience: an integral zippered pouch that swallows the bag when it's not in use.

Apart from those features, the Hide-Away Bag is fairly conventional. It's a 14x9x9-inch container made of 400-denier, 7-ounce, urethane-coated pack cloth, and the top flap opens via a two-way zipper. The two replaceable bungee cords are secured by nylon straps in the bag's base, with access provided by a pair of zippered openings. A pair of stainless-steel D-rings on top of the bag can double as mounts either for a shoulder strap (a $6.50 option), or for another bungee to fasten additional gear. Plus, a nylon grab-strap runs horizontally across the bag for ease of carrying, and a zippered pocket at the front can be used to stash small items or the Gear Bag itself. And when stuffed into the zippered pocket, the Hide-Away Bag condenses to a package slightly larger than that of a motorcycle toolkit.

The Hide-Away Bag's stuffable nature doesn't come without concessions, though. For one, the material is thin and flexible, and has no stiffeners to help the bag keep its shape. Consequently, partial loads that leave much of the bag's interior unoccupied will shift about, and the bag can slump to one side or the other. But, if the only choice is to travel with a partial load, you can simply flip the Gear Bag upside-down so the bungees exit at the top. In that position, the bungees compress the bag on its contents, and help keep the load from shifting. In addition, the bungees can be easily replaced, so that if they don't lend themselves to easy attachment to your motorcycle, you can swap them for longer or shorter cords.

Once we figured out how to use it, the Hide-Away Gear Bag became a convenient alternative to a tankbag or saddlebags. That convenience arises mostly from the bag's portability; stuffed into its pouch, the Hide-Away bag can be stored in a motorcycle's tailsection, in a fairing pocket or in a jacket pocket. And, when pressed into service, it can hold almost all of the gear you might need for weekend trip, up to and including a full-face helmet. Loading, though, is best accomplished before attaching the bag to the bike. Otherwise, the bag's floppiness makes the task a chore. But for the most part, Chase Harper's bag provides a handy measure of cargo capacity for when you need it—or when you don't.

The Hide-Away Gear Bag sells for $27.95, and is available from motorcycle dealers or through Chase Harper, Dept. CG, 321 A Anacapa, Santa Barbara, California 93103; (805) 962-3238.

—T.J. Rafferty

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Chase Harper's Hide-Away Gear Bag won't turn into a suitcase if you rub it

But it is a convenient, easily stowed alternative to hard luggage and tankbags.

ON-BOARD INSURANCE:

Cycle Guide's Survival Kit

We Don't Leave Home Without It.

Not long ago, preparing for a motorcycle trip was as elaborate as Lindberg's prepping for his transatlantic flight. Depending on your favorite flavor of motorcycle, a long-distance journey was anything from crossing Death Valley to a peril-laden jaunt to the corner grocery store. Bereaved family and sweethearts knew they'd never see the damnfool motorcyclist again; but with a dashing swish of the scarf, a quick slug of Perrier and a display of infinite bravado, the peripatetic two-wheeler roared off for the hinterlands.

Then, the typical disaster kit included an assortment of things such as: a spare magneto; dozens of taillight bulbs; a Hershey tropical chocolate bar; complete headlight assembly; spools of baling wire and rolls of duct tape. These items were bulky, heavy and didn't always address the problem.

While the thrill of uncertainty has been supplanted by today's subtler kinesthetic pleasures, mechanical failures and other roadside breakdowns still occur. Though new street motorcycles often make coast-to-coast runs with hardly more than an oil change, reliance on technology without alternatives is as crazy as Lindberg forgetting to pack his lunch. Romance and adventure are inherent in riding a bike, anyway, so why not update the survival kit to take advantage of some new S.O.S. goodies? Since it isn't practicable to lash a 12-drawer rolling toolbox to your bike, you need an alternative to riding in naked reliance on someone else's bailing you out. Part of the motorcyclist's rulebook says you'll break down at the worst possible moment in the worst possible place, where it will be hotter or colder—and lonelier—than you ever thought possible.

We think there is an alternative to the old duct-tape survival kit; what's more, we've assembled it. What we've put together for our staff—and these items go with us on every testing session—are things we wish we'd had at previous disasters. Of course, we haven't covered every contingency: You won't find a bear gun, shortwave radio or parachute, but this is a trick aggregation of compact, lightweight lifesavers. Whether your bankroll allows you to carry one or all of them, you'll be better off when you're stranded by the side of the road. Get prepared; you'll never have to rely upon the kindness of strangers again. *Continued*

PHOTOGRAPHY © 1984 VIC HUBER

Cycle Guide's Survival Kit *Continued*

1/ Eclipse Night Rider gives nighttime conspicuousness without the bother or bulkiness of flares. The Night Rider is a combination flasher/reflector the manufacturer claims lasts up to four hours with a fresh battery, is visible up to a mile at night and is weather-resistent. The Night Rider comes with a Polaroid Polapulse P100 battery, and can be purchased for $6.95 from motorcycle dealers or direct from Eclipse, Inc., Dept. CG, P.O. Box 7370, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48107.

2/ A clean faceshield can help you *avoid* the type of catastrophes that make this kit worthwhile. And the best way we know of to separate dirt, bugs and road-grime from a faceshield is with Yamaha's Windscreen Cleaner. Yamaha also claims Windscreen Cleaner can be used to polish many plastic and metal parts of your motorcycle. An eight-ounce plastic bottle of the cleaner costs $3.25, and can be purchased at Yamaha dealerships.

3/ When you're stranded by the road at night and need to see your bike in order to fix it, there's no substitute for the Tekna T-1000 MICRO-LITH flashlight. It's powered by a lithium battery the manufacturer claims will last 10 years without use until you need it. And, just in case you and your bike ride off a ferry before it completely docks, the T-1000 is waterproof down to 2000 feet, according to Tekna. This indispensable little night light is available for $19.95 at sporting goods stores, or it can be purchased direct from Tekna Design Group, Dept. CG, 1075 Old County Road, Belmont, California 94002.

4/ A Victorinox Swiss Army knife can help do everything from whittling down billboards to defending against rabid racoons. We've also found the Grand Prix model, $32.50, to be useful for motorcycle repairs and overnight bivouacs. The Grand Prix includes a long blade, short blade, can opener, bottle opener, scissors, screwdriver blade, heavy-duty file, Phillips-head screwdriver and a toothpick. You can purchase the Victorinox Grand Prix at cutlery and sporting goods stores.

5/ The Emergency Blanket is a thermal blanket designed to retain body heat in cold weather or post-accident shock situations. It folds up to shirt-pocket size, but unfolds to 7'x4'8". Because of its brilliant reflective gold foil, it also can be used to flag passing space ships or rescue-squad helicopters. The first-aid thermal blanket costs $2.95, and weighs only three ounces. You can pick one up at most sporting goods and recreational equipment stores, or though Metallized Products, Dept. CG, 37 East Street, Winchester, Massachusetts 01890.

6/ There's nothing like being stuck in the boonies with wet matches or no matches. Even if you don't want to send smoke signals, these waterproof matches can be a lifesaver. We carry ours in a plastic match container. You can purchase both at sporting goods and recreational equipment stores for less than $1.

7/ The REI Basic First Aid Kit is just the thing for road rashes or minor injuries. It contains plenty of bandages, aspirin, antacid, a razor blade, salt tablets and a first-aid booklet, among other basic body-fix things. You can pick one up at REI stores for $8.95.

8/ Empty plastic bottles are just dandy for filling with anything from cable lube to tooth polish. At less than $1 apiece, you'll have money left over for your choice of filler. You can purchase plastic bottles in various sizes at sporting goods and recreational equipment stores.

9/ Qwik Motorcycle Products, U.S.A., makes two of the best tire-repair kits we've found: the Emergency Tubeless Tire Kit and Tire/Tube Repair Kit. Each comes with two CO^2 cartridges and flex-line adaptor for easy filling. Instructions are included in both kits. The tubeless kit includes rubber cement, plugs and an L-shaped plug-inserter. The tire/tube kit comes with five patches and a buffer. You can purchase the tubeless kit for $22.95, and the tire/tube kit for $19.95 from motorcycle dealerships or direct from Qwik Products, Dept. CG, 1941 East Edinger Avenue, Santa Ana, California 92705.

10/ The Qwik Products Gauge Mounted Pump, retailing for $36.95, is the trick way to insure that your air suspension is properly adjusted. Gauges come in different calibrations (15, 30, 60 or 100 psi), and two pump bodies (high-pressure/low-volume or high-volume/low-pressure). You can find yours at motorcycle dealerships or direct from Qwik Products.

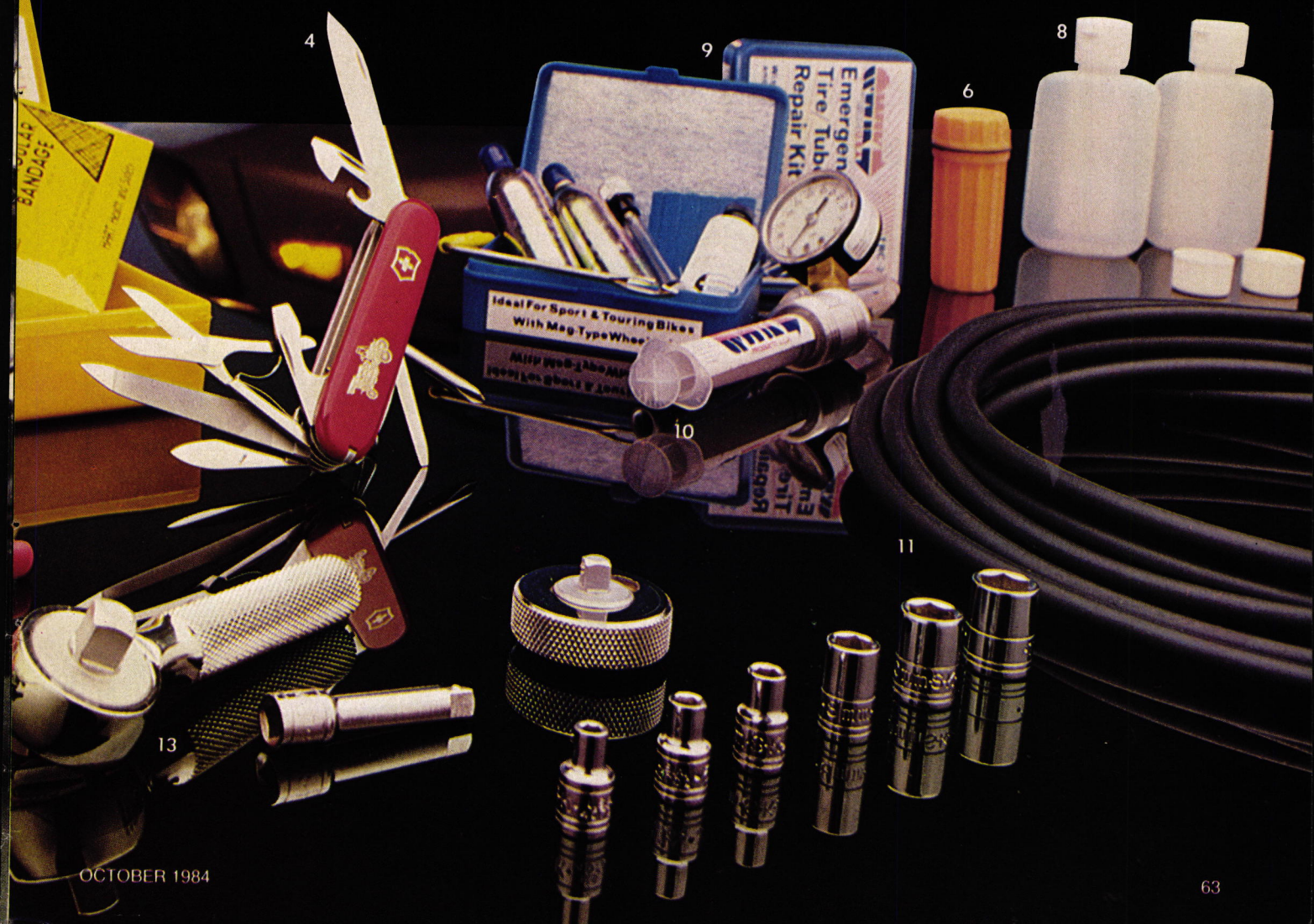
11/ Fuel line is useful for all sorts of things, from repairing burst lines to siphoning fuel. Anyone who's been stranded miles away from a gas station knows the frustration of being assisted by a passing motorist with gas in the tank of his car, but no way to transfer it to your bike. We've included four feet of hose per kit. You can purchase fuel line at motorcycle shops everywhere, for about $1 per foot.

12/ Craftsman self-locking needlenose pliers ($9.99) are a must. They're small enough to fit into tight places, and the self-locking feature insures a strong grip. You can find these at Sears, Roebuck and Co.

13/ S-K Products' ¼" drive Thumbwheel ratchet and 4/5/5.5/8/10/11mm socket set ($21.79) plus a 12mm socket we've added, or S-K's stubby ⅜" ratchet ($18.69) and a handful of appropriate sockets are tools we find indispensable. The thumbwheel ratchet set is great for getting into tight places, while the stubby ratchet is a useful compromise between close-quarters work and having the leverage of a full-size ratchet. You can find both items at hardware stores.

14/ Crescent's 28.5mm groove-joint pliers ($7.99) are perfect for working on rounded bolt and screw heads, hose clamps, etc. The handles are rubberized for comfort and a non-slip grip. They're available at hardware stores.

Not shown are large-capacity plastic garbage bags. We've used them as emergency raingear, fluid holders, emergency luggage, lunch sacks and parts holders. Also not shown is the multi-purpose bandana, which serves as dust/smog mask, neck protector, towel and motorcycle rag.



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PRODUCT EVALUATION:

Yamaha Windscreen Cleaner

A new kind of Vision from Yamaha.

• Bugs, dirt and dust are the nemeses of every rider's vision. They stick with remarkable tenacity to the plastic windshields, goggles and faceshields we see through, and while soap and water will get the muck off, not everyone carries a kitchen sink on his motorcycle.

One answer to this problem is Yamaha's Windscreen Cleaner, a product designed to clean plastic and remove minor scratches at the same time. Although the cleaner doesn't loosen dried-on bugs as well as hot soapy water, it does remove detritus much more easily than a dry rag would. And Yamaha's cleaner also lives up to its claim of removing scratches.

Use of the cleaner does, however, involve a couple of minor annoyances. Buffing the fluid off with a dry cloth creates static electricity, which tends to pull dust and lint back onto the surface right after it's been wiped off. Plus, between uses the cleaner coagulates in the nozzle, and the bottle requires either a crusher grip or a tool to clear the spout.

But those inconveniences don't reduce the Yamaha Windscreen Cleaner's effectiveness—or its usefulness. The eight-ounce plastic bottle (available at Yamaha dealers, for a suggested retail price of $3.25) is small enough to be carried easily in a tankbag or fairing pocket, and along with a soft rag it's all you need to update your eyesight. Perhaps Yamaha should have dubbed *this* product the Vision. —*Paul Van Zuyle*

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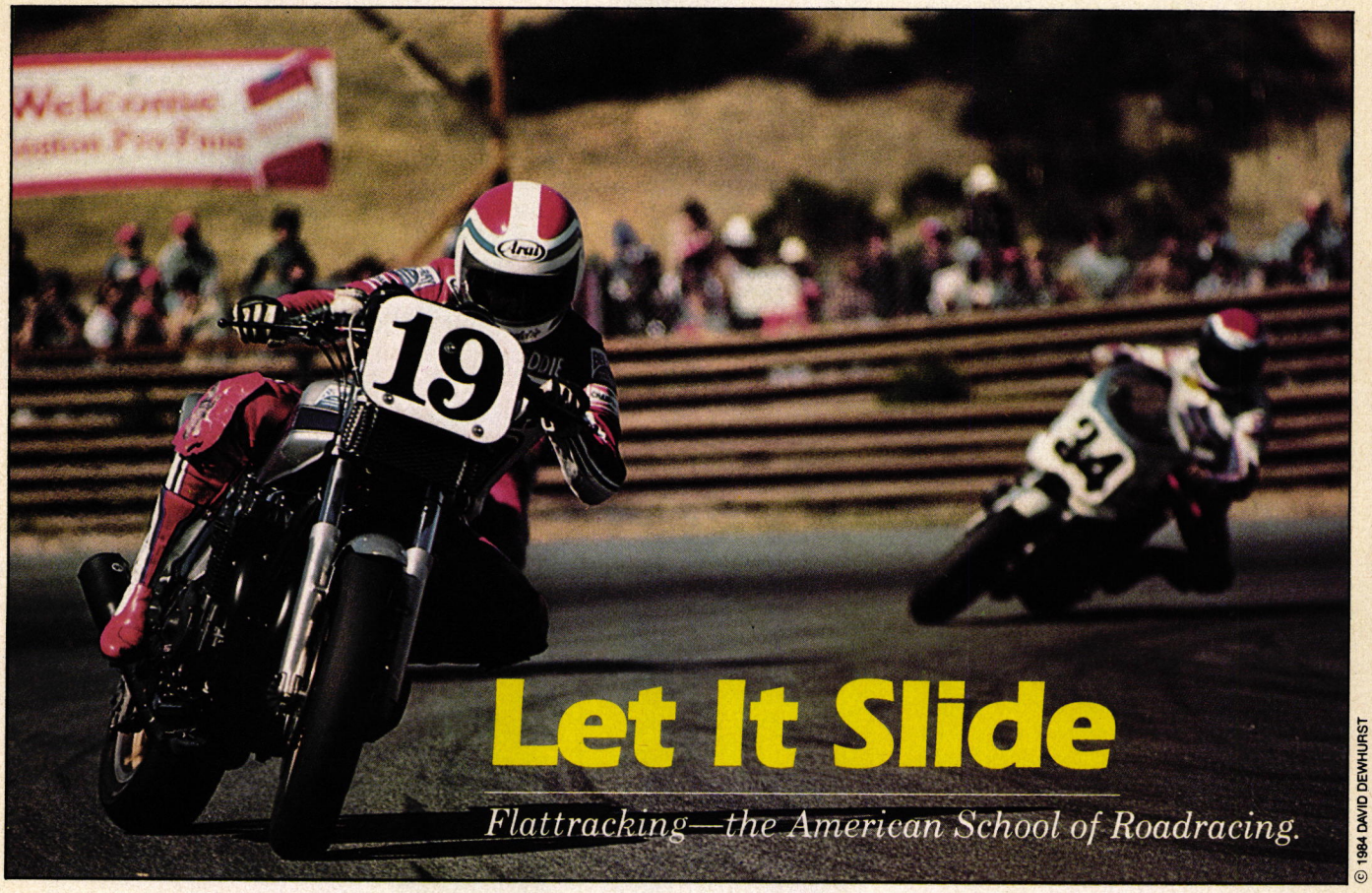
SPORT LINES

Cycle Guide's True Tales of Racecourses, Dark Horses and Machines at Speed

BY DAIN GINGERELLI



Let It Slide

Flattracking—the American School of Roadracing.

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• The record speaks for itself: Americans have won every 500cc roadracing Grand Prix since Randy Mamola won the German GP in 1982 at Hockenheim. As a result, there's a standing joke on the Continent that the "Star Spangled Banner" has become Europe's adopted national anthem. America's dominance of a sport that was, until only a few years ago, ruled by Europeans, has forced roadrace insiders to reconsider just what it takes to be a winner in the 500 GP class. And the consensus is that a winning rider needs a solid background in dirttrack racing, just as the Americans have. All five Americans in Europe—World Champion Freddie Spencer, now-retired Kenny Roberts, Randy Mamola, Eddie Lawson and 250cc star Wayne Rainey—earned their racing spurs on the dirt ovals of America, and all five seemed to have incorporated some of their dirttrack skills into their pavement-racing techniques. Based on their results, it seems that flattrackers make better roadracers than riders who were groomed from the very beginning on macadam courses.

One man who agrees with that line of reasoning is Keith Code, owner and head instructor of the California Superbike School, and the man who has tutored such pavement specialists as Rainey and Lawson. Code says, "They (flattrackers) are willing to do anything that's necessary to get the job done." That job, he says, is going fast—usually accomplished by sliding both tires through the corners—on motorcycles that weigh less than 230 pounds, and that produce in excess of 140 horsepower. "Sliding a roadracer," Code explains, "is a part of winning in any roadrace class, from the 80s (80cc GP class) up to the 500s."

Gary Mathers, Kawasaki's former roadrace team manager, is another supporter of the flattrackers-make-better-roadracers philosophy. Mathers once said he preferred having flattrackers—including Lawson and Rainey—pilot his team's Superbikes. "They (flattrackers) are used to going sideways," Mathers said, "and since Superbikes aren't roadracer-designed bikes, they slide through the turns, especially considering that they have more horsepower than they need."

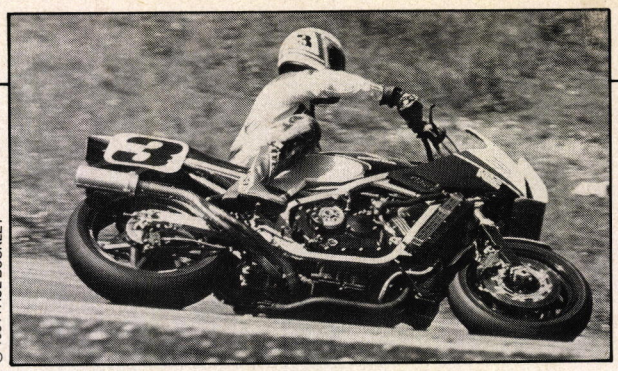
But it was Kenny Roberts, more than any other racer, who shattered the old school of roadracing's notion that a rider had to be smooth to be fast. It was Roberts who ushered in a new era in the sport, one of blistered tires and squared-off corners. And it was Roberts who first brought his freewheeling, sliding style to Europe in 1978. Europe's "smooth riders," led by Barry Sheene, scoffed at the two-time AMA National Champion, and said he couldn't cut it on the tough Grand Prix roadrace circuits. It would take him at least one season just to learn the courses, let alone be competitive, the doubters said.

Almost everyone discounted Roberts' chances of winning a race in Europe—not to mention a world championship—in 1978. As it turned out, Roberts slid and fought his

Continued

way to several wins that year, until America finally had its first 500cc roadrace World Champion. "I wasn't out of control," he said about his first season in Europe. "I didn't crash as much as the other guys who were going fast." And as a result of Roberts' success, other roadracers have had to adjust their riding styles to accommodate sliding the slick tires of their 150-mph motorcycles, in order to stay competitive. As Roberts said, "It's (sliding) the fastest way to go around a corner."

Not all of the European riders have been able to incorporate dirttrack-style sliding into their repertoires, and that's become a major difference between the Americans and most foreign roadracers on the Grand Prix circuit. There is one other obvious distinction, though: None of the old guard—the riders who prefer to ride smoothly through corners instead of using the brash broadsliding style developed by ex-flattrackers—has won a GP in almost two years. And that's the most important difference. Because in Grand Prix roadracing, winning is what counts, no matter how it's done. *—Dain Gingerelli*



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Sliding Out

"All the top roadracers in Europe. . . are ex-dirttrack racers."
—Ricky Graham

• Ask former AMA Camel Pro Series Grand National Champion Ricky Graham what he thinks of roadracing, and he'll tell you it looks like a lot of fun. But he also understands there's a lot more to going fast on pavement than meets the eye. Graham knows, too, that as a flattracker, he has an inside line to becoming a proficient roadracer. "You look at all the top roadracers in Europe," he said, "and they're ex-dirttrack racers."

And it's his own dirttrack experience that Graham is counting on to help him adjust to the high-speed ballet of roadracing. "Kenny (Roberts) told me that it's (roadracing) easier if you have dirttrack experience," Graham said.

The way Graham figures it, if Mamola, Lawson and Rainey can adapt to roadracing, so can he. After all, Graham is considered to be one of the top Mile racers in America, and as he pointed out, "Those are the guys (Lawson, Mamola and Rainey) that couldn't cut it in dirttrack." But they certainly proved their mettle in roadracing. *—Dain Gingerelli*

Making Change

• Although it's generally accepted that dirttrack racers can be good roadracers, adjusting to the asphalt isn't easy. And Keith Code is one man who has helped more than a few riders to understand the basics of roadracing, including Wayne Rainey and Eddie Lawson. Code owns the California Superbike School, and is its head instructor.

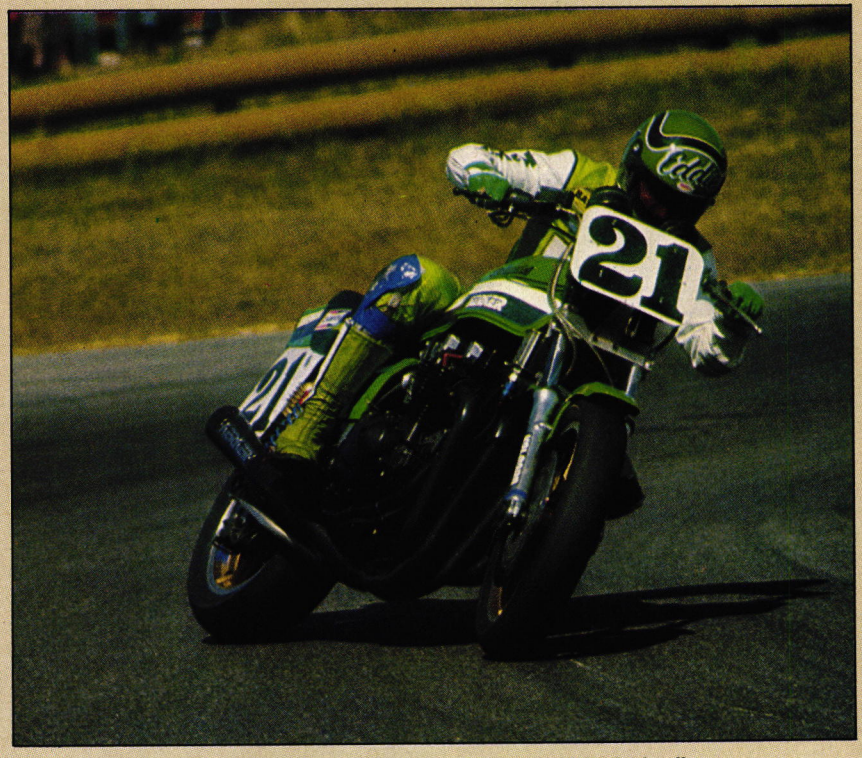
Most recently, Code tutored American Honda's trio of flattrack riders—Ricky Graham, Bubba Shobert and Doug Chandler—at Willow Springs racetrack. All three, Code said, showed enough promise on their Interceptor-based F1 bikes to be competitive in Camel Pro Series roadraces. But the rider with the largest hurdle to overcome was Shobert. "Bubba had this preconception that he had to spin the rear tire when he was out there," Code said, adding that the wheelspinning antics actually were slowing Shobert down.

Despite his dramatic flair at Willow, though, Shobert led his dirttrack teammates during qualifying for their first roadrace, the Loudon National, and put his Honda vee-four sixth on the grid. Graham showed he had the right stuff as well, by finishing second behind Wes Cooley in his heat race.

But Chandler was the biggest surprise. The lanky rider from Northern California rode a steady race in the 75-mile-long Main, and finished sixth while his Honda factory teammates DNFed. Chandler's performance even caused Code to predict, "Chandler is going to be world champion."

Code's reasoning runs like this: "He's willing to change things while riding on the track. He *understands* that nothing is absolute, even in roadracing." According to Code, perhaps Chandler's best roadracing attribute is his height. "He's tall, like Freddie (Spencer)," Code said, "for good balance on a 500."

And if Code is right about his most recent student, we'll soon add yet another flattracker to the growing list of roadrace world champions.
—Dain Gingerelli



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Former AMA Superbike Champion Eddie Lawson learned his skills in the dirt
He later cleaned up his act, and took his show on the road.

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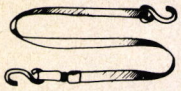

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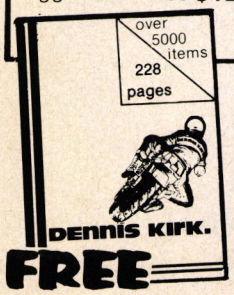

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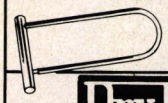

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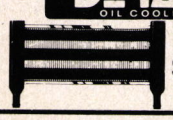

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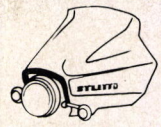

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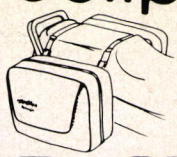

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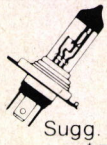

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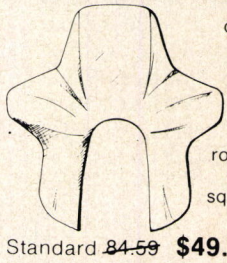

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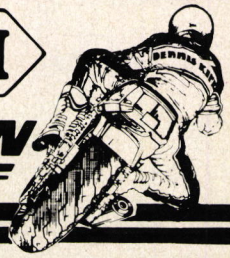

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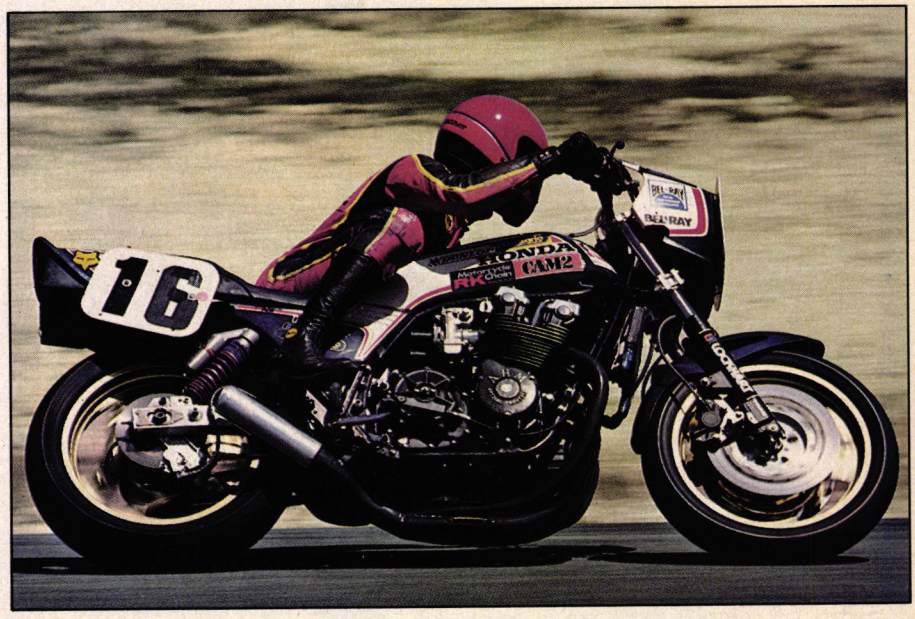


PHOTOGRAPHY © 1984 PATRICK BEHAR

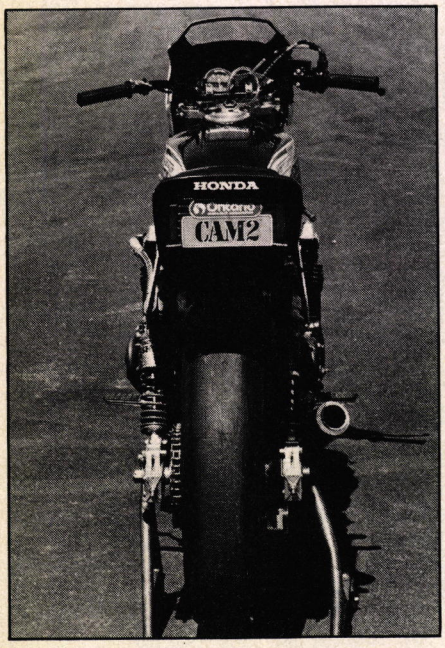
• As a rule, when you fit racing slicks to a streetbike, and boost its power output by almost a third, handling problems crop up. Most roadbike chassis just aren't designed to cope with the extra loads generated by slicks and massive amounts of horsepower. Kaz Yoshima, owner of Ontario Moto Tech, proved the exception to that rule, however, by developing a 137-horsepower Honda CB1100F endurance-racer that performs as though it were designed for racing.

In recasting the CB1100F into its endurance-racer mold, Yoshima left the chassis nearly stock. "I raised the rear suspension some," he said, "to reduce the rake, so the bike would be easier to steer." Plus, he also fit a special set of aluminum triple clamps that provide 125mm of trail, 5mm more than the stock CB1100F triple clamps. Other significant chassis modifications include a mechanical anti-dive that replaces the TRAC anti-dive units on the stock fork, and a Honda CR250R swingarm to accommodate an oversize Dunlop rear slick. But for the most part, Yoshima left the chassis well enough alone. He figures that predominantly stock specifications make an endurance racer more comfortable for its riders than a heavily modified bike would be, in addition to allowing quick parts-changes, in the event of a crash.

The CB1100's motor, on the other hand, isn't nearly so standard. Engine displacement grew from 1062cc to 1125cc, via oversize sleeves with 2mm-larger bores. Sliding in those bores are high-domed 72mm pressure-die-cast aluminum pistons of Yoshima's own design that increase the compression ratio from 9.7:1 to 10.5:1. The engine uses stock 26mm intake valves, fed by a quartet of Keihin CR Special 33mm carburetors. Along with the carbs, a one-off exhaust system keeps the Ontario engine breathing freely at high rpm. "The motor pulls strong to 10,500," says Yoshima, "but we tried to run it between 9500 and 9800 in a race. If there was no competition, then we'd keep it at about 8700."

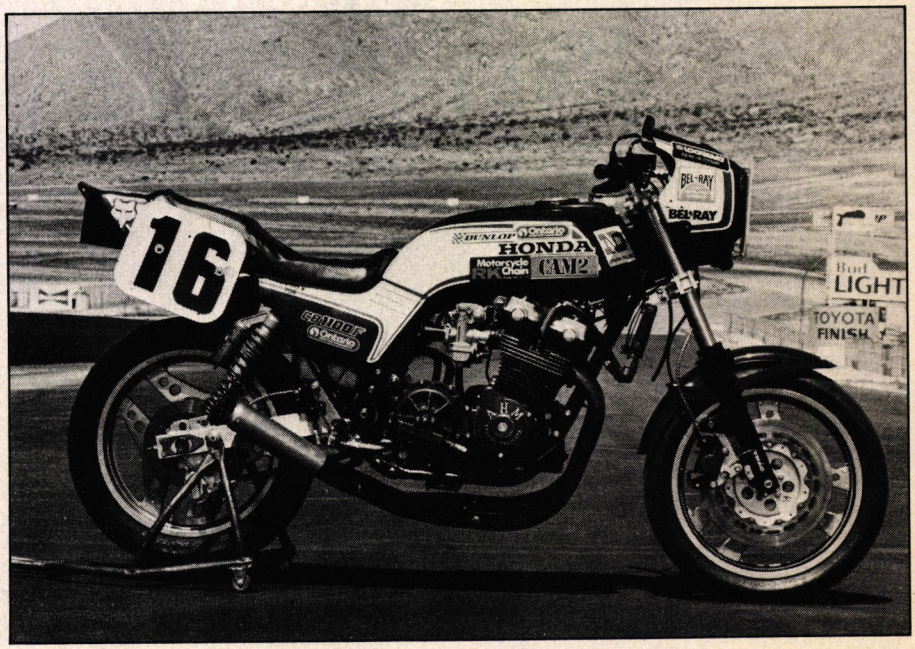
And when it came to winning races, the OMT CB1100F performed: With riders Lynn Miller, Luther Wikle and John Ashmeade, the bike won seven of 14 WERA endurance races in which it was entered. However, several DNFs relegated the team to second in the overall point standings behind Team Hammer.

Ontario Moto Tech's near-stock approach to endurance racing paid dividends last year, and the team is approaching 1984 with the same basic philosophy; they'll campaign a near-stock Honda VF1000F Interceptor. The way Yoshima figures it, if a slightly modified CB1100F can win seven races, imagine what the new vee-four Honda can do. —*Dain Gingerelli*



The CB1100F looks slick from the rear

Hard compound for a hard day's work.

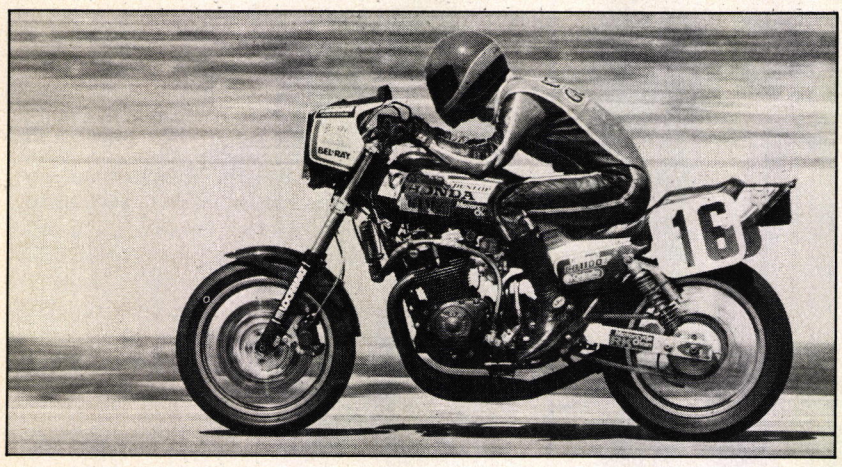


At a glance, the Team Ontario bike appears much like a stocker

But beneath the mild-mannered appearance is an all-day fighter.

Gingerelli has a few words with Team Ontario's Kaz Yoshima

Discussing what it takes to win an all-day battle.



A few laps on an all-day racer

• Sure, the best way to evaluate an endurance racer is to spend 24 hours in its saddle. But we were content with something a little less grueling than a sunup-to-sunup ride: An afternoon of hot laps around Willow Springs Raceway would suffice to see how Team Ontario's CB1100F performed.

And once the Dunlop slicks warmed up, the near-stock-appearing Honda tracked well around each of Willow's nine turns. In fact, the Open-class racer steered so precisely that no hidden quirks surfaced, even when stuffing the bike into the sharp, downhill, off-camber Turn Five. The engine's powerband made riding fast easy, too. Power began to come on hard at about 5000 rpm; and above 9500 rpm, the 1125cc engine came alive, the exhaust noise remaining audible even above the wind roar.

Apart from the racer-sharp steering, we discovered another interesting facet of the OMT bike's handling during our testing: If you sit too far forward on the saddle while flying down a straightaway, the bike starts to wobble. None of the Team Ontario riders experienced that handling phenomenon, though, because they all sat far back on the seat when tucked-in at high speed.

But Team Ontario won't have to try to correct the CB1100F's wobble; the air-cooled bike has been retired, to be replaced by a VF1000F Interceptor. And judging from our experience with the Interceptor's chassis, Yoshima and Team Ontario should continue their winning ways in endurance racing.

—Dain Gingerelli

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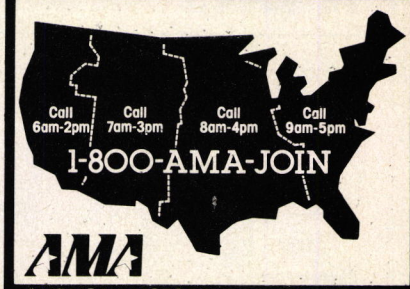

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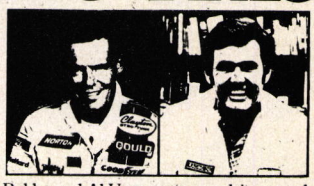

Bobby and Al Unser, race car drivers and motorcyclists. *"On the race track, we're both in total control. We approach off-road riding the same way. Reckless riding is stupid. And not very impressive to the hikers and campers we meet."*

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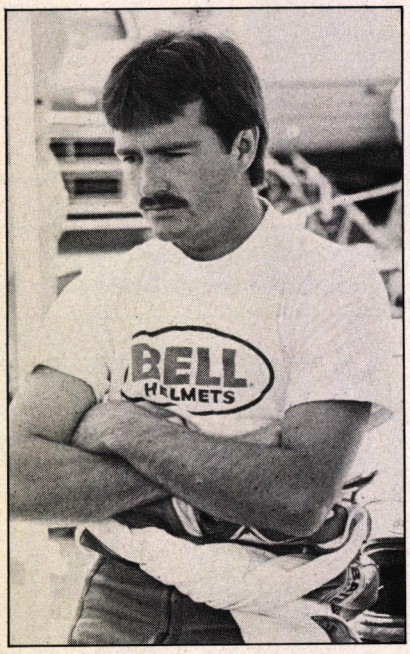

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Bubba Shobert in his corner

Waiting for the bell to ring.

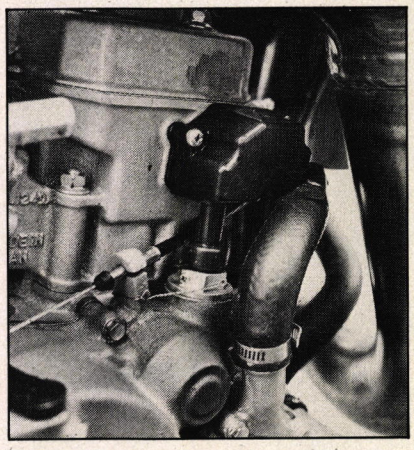
• Battling Bubba: AMA officials suspended Team Honda flattrack rider Bubba Shobert for 45 days following his brief fistfight with fellow Texan Terry Poovey at the St. Louis Shorttrack. The two riders had bumped while on the racetrack during practice, and, following a heated discussion, exchanged punches. Shobert won the bout, and Poovey sustained an eye injury. The end result was a unanimous decision by the race officials to fine Shobert $1000 and suspend him from Camel Pro racing for 45 days.

• Split decision: Following his suspension, Shobert filed an appeal, and was temporarily reinstated pending a final decision by the AMA. During that reinstatement, Shobert won the Hagerstown Half-Mile, but the win was for naught. The AMA appeal board reinstated the fine, and lowered the suspension to six races in consideration of Shobert's clean riding record. But the first of those races was Hagerstown, and his win was discounted.

• On track: If things go as planned, Southern California will have a new roadrace/oval-track facility. According to sources, a California business consortium intends to establish the racing plant south of San Diego, almost adjacent to the Mexican border. The road course reportedly would measure 2.65 miles, and would include elevation changes of up to 200 feet. The final decision on whether or not to to build the track has not been made, however.

• International Superbike: Superbike racing as the AMA knows it could become an international class as early as March of 1985. Steve McLaughlin, a former Superbike racer, has helped form a rules committee to spearhead a worldwide Superbike series that would incorporate some AMA Class C rules of the Sixties and early Seventies. As proposed, the rules would be stricter than current AMA Superbike rules, and would require the bikes to have stock engine cases, cranks, connecting rods and pistons. Events in the series are planned for Europe, America, and possibly Africa and parts of Asia.

• KX powervalve: Kawasaki seems to be putting all its eggs in the 125cc class for motocross racing this year. The most recent works 125 for Jeff Ward to arrive from Osaka, Japan, has a power-valve system designed to perform the same powerband-widening function of Yamaha and Honda exhaust valves.



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Kawasaki's new power-valve system

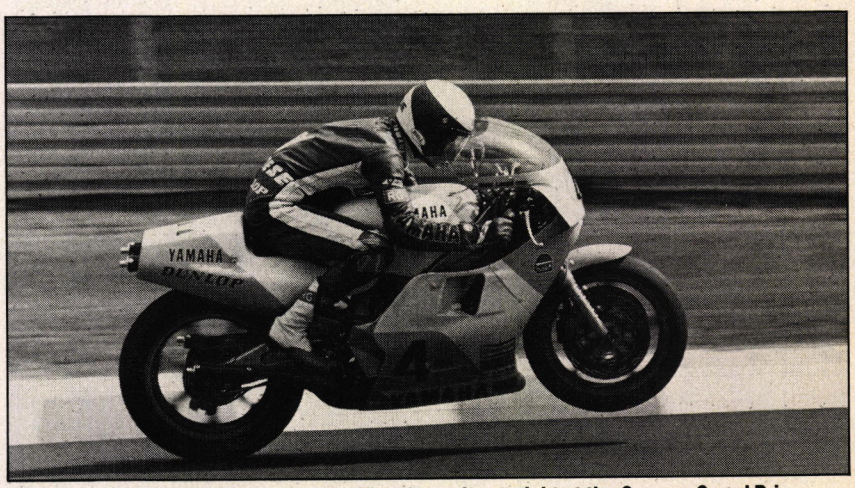
Exhausting every lead for speed.

• Tire test: Laguna Seca might have been Kenny Roberts' final race, but it was also a weekend in which he aided Eddie Lawson's effort to win this year's 500cc World Championship. It's no secret that Lawson's bike has had handling problems during the last few GPs, and so Roberts was pressed into service during the Laguna Seca weekend to test some new Dunlop slicks. After his win, Roberts reported that the tire combination he selected for the second heat worked best. Even Yamaha race director Ken Clark paid praise to Dunlop: "Those guys did one heck of a job."

• Sponsors wanted: The cost of fielding a 500cc Grand Prix roadracing team has escalated sharply during the past years. So much so, in fact, that insiders say it will become necessary for practically every GP team to have a major sponsor to help foot the bill. That need for outside money applies, some say, even to Honda, which in the past has relied on a fat corporate checkbook to underwrite its GP roadracing program.

• Roll your own: Outside sponsors such as Marlboro and HB cigarette companies might be the saviors of GP roadracing. But the West German government has no intention of abandoning its rigid policy of forbidding cigarette advertising of any form on television. Consequently, teams such as Yamaha's Marlboro-backed effort and the HB/Suzuki team have to block out their sponsor's logos for any German GP televised there.

• Quote Department: In response to a question about Kenny Roberts' son, Kenny Jr., following his father's footsteps as a motorcycle racer, Roberts said, "No, no. . .golf. I've been to enough motorcycle races." *—Dain Gingerelli*



© 1984 SPORT GRAPHICS

Eddie Lawson aboard the Yamaha, smoking down the straight at the German Grand Prix

No Marlboro stickers this time.

Lighten up

Team Yoshimura gets caught with its pounds down.

• Laguna Seca proved to be an embarassing race for two Superbike teams. First, because the Superbike National pitted American Honda, the industry giant that has steamrollered the class all season, against Team Yoshimura, a small performance shop from Brea, California. And second, because Yoshimura's Superbike finished first—only to be relegated to second by AMA rules, and then disqualified.

Indeed, Team Yoshimura, with two-time AMA Superbike Champion Wes Cooley in the saddle, had tackled the Laguna Seca National with all the vigor necessary to win. In the process, Cooley caught and passed Honda's Fred Merkel on lap 22 of the race—the same lap that the red flag went out, stopping the race because of an accident in Turn Four. Officials ultimately decided the race had run a sufficient distance, and decided not to hold a restart. So, according to AMA rules, the finishing order was determined on the lap before the red flag, when Merkel was in the lead. Cooley and Yoshimura went from first to second, just like that.

But according to Cooley, the setback was only technical. "Everyone knows what went on out there, so we're OK," he told the supportive crowd after the race. And Cooley was cheered as if he'd won, because in their hearts, he had.

The situation changed, though, during the mandatory technical inspection for the first three finishers. The Yoshimura-Suzuki was underweight, which lead to a subsequent disqualification by the AMA. According to AMA rules, the minimum weight for four-cylinder 750cc Superbikes is 390 pounds (weighed on AMA scales, with no gasoline in the tank). Cooley's bike weighed 386 pounds on the AMA scales at Laguna, making it four pounds light—and was disqualified.

Yoshimura issued a statement at the track the following day to explain the discrepancy. According to the release, the bike had been weighed on Yoshimura's shop scales before the race, and weighed "approximately 400 pounds," leaving, the release said, a 10-pound "safety margin" for error. The difference in weight, the release claimed, was in the tires used. Yoshimura had previously run Dunlop slicks, but switched to Michelins for Laguna Seca. CYCLE GUIDE weighed a set of Dunlop slicks and a set of Michelin slicks identical to those Yoshimura used at Laguna Seca, and found the Michelins were 0.5-pound *heavier* than the Dunlops, not four-to-six pounds lighter, as Team Yoshimura's release claimed.

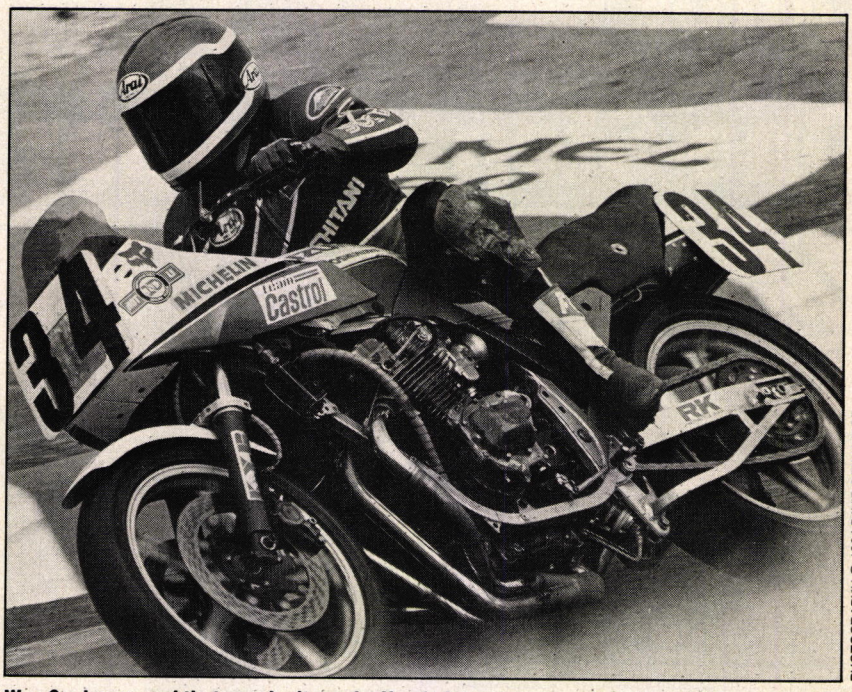
Yoshimura Vice-President Suehiro Watanabe explained that his team had put a lot of pressure on itself to win the Laguna Seca Superbike event, a race he described as "the second-most important race in America." The team, he said, had simply tried too hard, in the process accidently shaving off more weight than the rules allowed. He also said the bike had been weighed on Yoshimura's shop scales—a set of bathroom scales which the team found last March to be in agreement with the scales at the Daytona International Speedway—and was exactly 396 pounds. Watanabe shouldered the responsibility for the blame, though. "It's my fault," he said, "I'm in charge of the racing department."

In the end, Watanabe said there was no excuse for the bike's illegal weight. Team Yoshimura had done everything possible to make the bike competitive, and had made a costly oversight on one thing—its weight. "We didn't cheat," added Watanabe.

Cooley, the unsuspecting casualty of the disqualification, summed it up best. "As far as I'm concerned, Yosh made a mistake," he said. "They pushed the rules to the nitty-gritty; I just ended up on the short end of the stick."

Finally, Cooley just shrugged it off, using an old cliche that fit the occasion perfectly. "I just ride the motorcycle," he said. And as he proved at Laguna Seca, he rides the bike quite well.

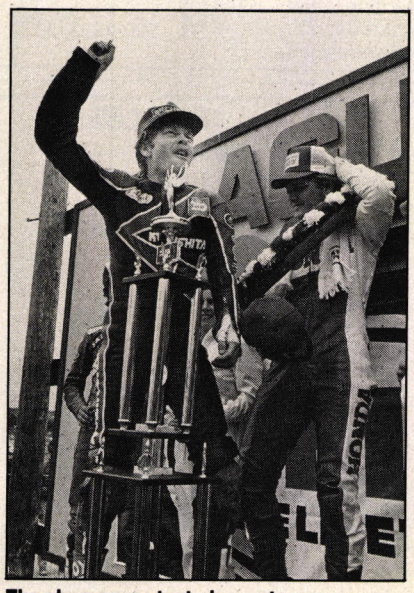
—Dain Gingerelli •



PHOTOGRAPHY © 1984 DAVID DEWHURST

Wes Cooley proved that you don't need a Honda Interceptor to win in Superbike racing

But after the race, the scales of justice—and the AMA—weighed against him.



The champagne tasted sweet

But the rules went sour.

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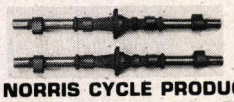

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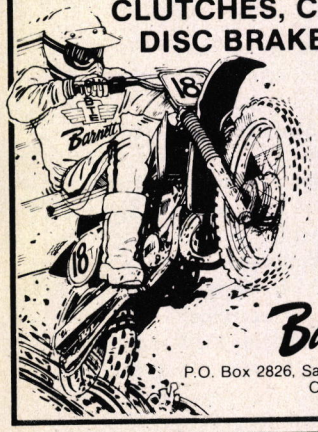

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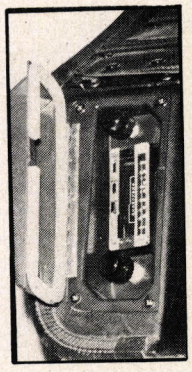

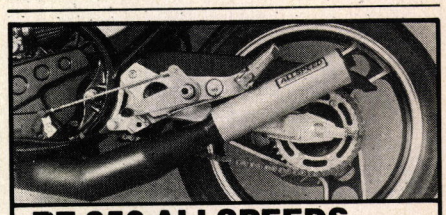

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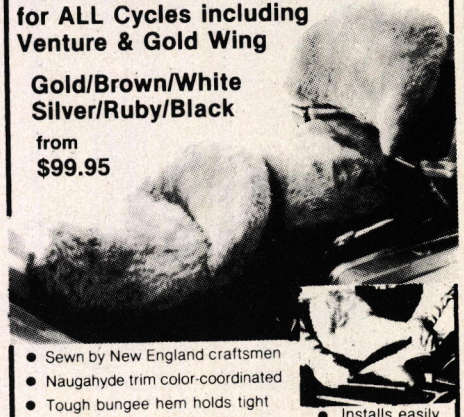

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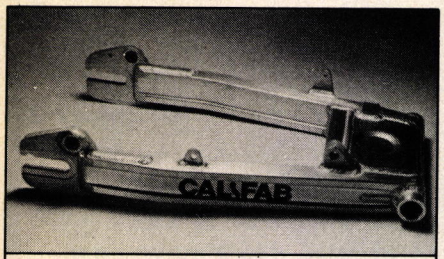

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BIMOTA CRUISER?

No! Tell me it's not real! Tell me it's a joke or a nightmare or something! I am referring, of course, to Suzuki's new "Madura." It's one thing for Honda to build a fantastic vee-four, with shaft drive no less, and then ruin it by putting it into a Disco-Davidson. But Suzuki? What's the world coming to? Being a die-hard Suzuki fan (or former Suzuki fan), I just can't believe it. Suzuki should have given all of the first year's engines to Bimota, or at least made a good sport-tourer out of it. Putting a motor like that into something like the Madura has got to be sinful.

D. Wahls
Los Angeles, California

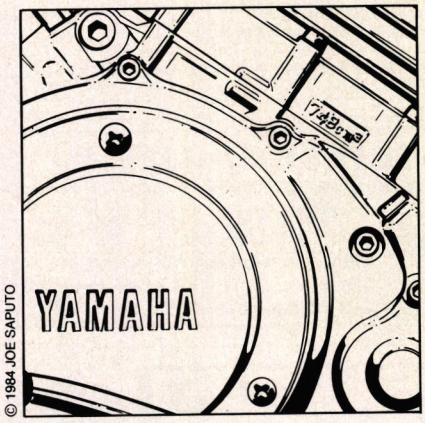
Perhaps the stylists can stop by confession on their way to the bank—ed.

ANOTHER GUIDE

As a four-year subscriber of CYCLE GUIDE, I would like to bring up a point to the readers who can find nothing better to do than criticize the magazine: If you don't like the way CYCLE GUIDE does its tests and evaluations, why don't you gather all the people who think like you and purchase *all* the new bikes that come out, rent Willow Springs, hire photographers and research writers, tear down the bikes and "spec" them (using qualified mechanics) and research *all* the cycle rumors and news, then meet the printing deadlines. Oh yeah, and get letters from others who think they can do a better job than you do. You could then call the magazine *Criers' Guide.*

James Schiller
Orinda, California

Do you think anyone would read it?—ed.



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NO TASTE

In reference to your "Silver Bullet Award" (August 1984): You have managed to transcend your commonplace vulgarity by perpetrating a unique atrocity. Chrome-plating a K-series BMW is tantamount to spray painting your name on the Mona Lisa. I firmly believe you and all your minions of tastelessness should be boiled down to glue. I sincerely believe you would be happier on the bottom of a lake.

Paul V. Campbell
Stockbridge, Massachusetts

Does that mean you agreed with the choice, or what?—ed.

THE MORNING AFTER

So, you chromed another one. My question is—what do you do with it?

Jillian Fittinger
Stanton, California

For the most part, we just sit around and reflect on it—ed.

EVERYBODY LOVES A LOSER

In reference to your "Silver Bullet Awards" (August 1984), what's the GS1150 doing in there? It should not be

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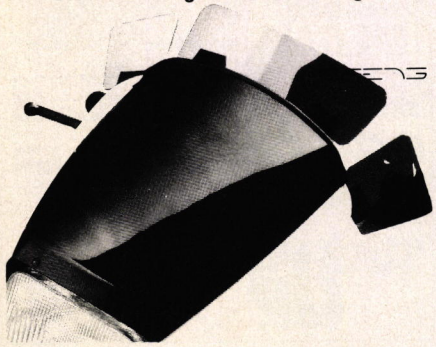

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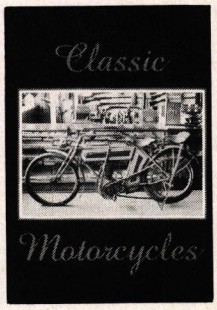

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LETTERS

in there for all the reasons you stated, and more. The same goes for the Honda Aspencade. I suspect the Aspencade is in there to meet the quota requirements set forth by Honda at payoff time. Accept it, the Yamaha Venture is better. Also, how about chroming the blonde to match the Beemer?

Steve Stoeser
Seattle, Washington

One criterion was each bike's significance, and the GS and Aspencade made the cut. As for the blonde, we thought about it, but didn't have the metal—ed.

BIKE OF THE YEAR

The cover of the CYCLE GUIDE will never be adorned as beautifully. The brilliant sheen; the flowing lines; the exquisite detail can only be surpassed by the recognition given the K100RS with the Silver Bullet award. European motorcycles, German in particular, have not given into "Japanese engineering," and the K100s have carried German engineering one step closer to perfection. My current turbocharged 1982 R100RS can only be outclassed by the new K100RS. All that remains now is to convince my wife I need another $7000 motorcycle in the garage.

Lonnie R. Axt
Duarte, California

Perhaps you should tell her the blonde isn't part of the deal—ed.

COMPLETE AGREEMENT

After trying the new K100 BMW, I wholeheartedly agree with your choice of "Bike of the Year." This machine is all you have said: strong linear acceleration, the best brakes on the market, etc. To my way of thinking, the bike has only three drawbacks: the angled passenger perch that causes my wife to slide into me, the high-frequency vibration, and last, but not least, the stiff price. Here in Canada, a K-RT will set you back almost $11,000!

Guy Parrot
Montreal, Quebec
Canada

SHORTCHANGED

Seeing the silver BMW doing your August 1984 cover wonders, I assumed there would be an article inside about this new Euro wonder. Nay, there were but two pages of BMW K100RS copy. And part of that was dedicated to the Honda Interceptor, last years' Silver Bullet winner. The rest of your magazine was dedicated to those plastic, uniform, obsolete-next-year bikes I think are fine—as long as they are not in my garage.

I do occasionally enjoy your magazine's road tests and comparisons and the like. However, if you have a bike on the cover, give us something to read about it inside.

Paul Turner
Cottage Grove, Oregon

The blonde wasn't enough, eh Turner?—ed. ●

All letters must include the writer's name and address. Letters will be edited for length. Due to the volume of mail received, we regret we are unable to give personal responses.

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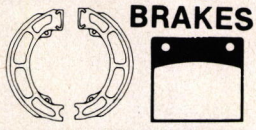
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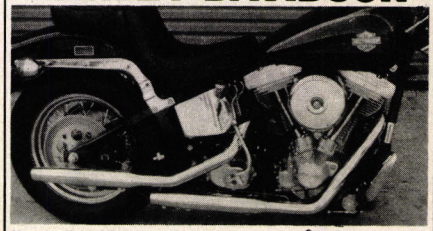
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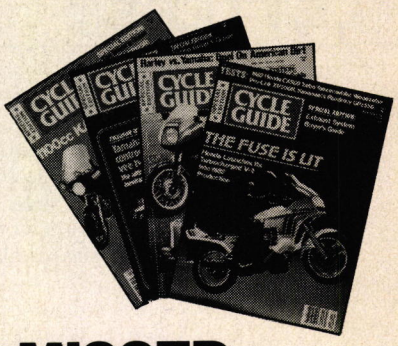

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